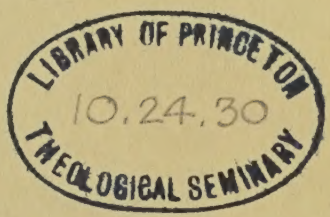

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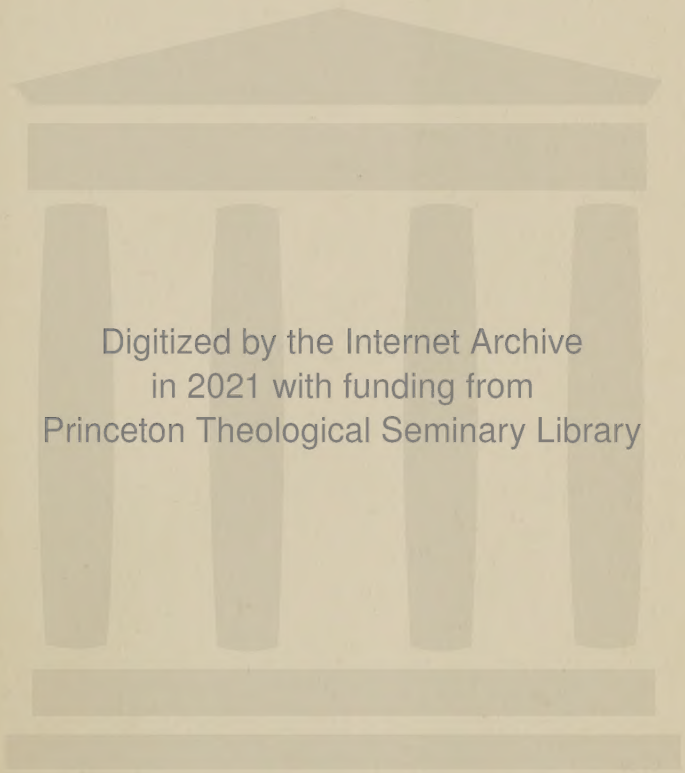
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HOW SHALL I LEARN TO TEACH RELIGION?

HOW SHALL I LEARN TO TEACH RELIGION ?

Teaching Through the Experience of the Pupil

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by

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TO TEACH RELIGION?

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To My Dear Friend

SUE DENKMAN HAUBERG

FOREWORD

THIS little book has been written with the purpose of helping the great body of Sunday-school teachers to understand the new approach to religious education. As the author has gone into scores of churches to advise with or speak to the teachers, she discovers them bewildered by or impatient with the newer courses and methods. When they have come to see the underlying reasons for this change, they have been eager to learn to use the new approach. The various chapters of this book have been given many times as talks to teachers to help them toward such an understanding. May it prove helpful to many others.

The author owes an unpayable debt to Miss Mary Jenness, who gave detailed criticism of the manuscript and whose keen evaluations were invaluable. She is also indebted to Dr. A. J. W. Myers and to Dr. Paul Vieth, both of whom read the manuscript and gave valuable suggestions.

BLANCHE CARRIER.

Pittsburgh, 1930.

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HOW SHALL I LEARN TO TEACH RELIGION?

CHAPTER I

Why Do We Need a New Method of Teaching?

"WHY do we tell so many secular stories to the children on the Sabbath?" asked a Sunday School teacher recently. "I feel like apologizing to a child for teaching him anything but the Bible, when this one hour a week may be the only time that he has to learn it."

Hundreds of Sunday School teachers are asking such questions as this after trying to teach the new courses of study. In these modern courses they find a totally new method of teaching, a body of material radically different from that in the older courses. The teachers' books and magazines they read and the conferences they attend are full of strange new plans for which they can see no reason. They feel the children are being robbed of the knowledge of the Bible which they were taught so thoroughly. These new methods demand a vast amount of study, reading, collecting of materials, while the old method of explaining the passage and teaching the Golden Text is so

simple. A direct learning of facts is, to the adults at least, so much quicker and more satisfactory than this method which seems to employ so much that is unimportant. Teachers everywhere are asking, "Why should we go to all the trouble of learning a new method when we don't believe in it?" It is because they do not understand the reasons lying behind this change of materials that many teachers do not believe in the newer courses.

We need only to study the attitudes of the children and young people, however, to discover that the change must come. The mother of seven-year-old Peggy said, "My Peggy says, 'Mother, I don't like Sunday School. I don't like to go into the chapel.' When I asked her why she feels so, she says, 'Oh, they just waste our time.' " Many mothers of adolescent boys and girls have said, "I have to argue every Sunday with my children about going to Sunday School. They say 'Mother, we aren't learning a thing' or 'Our teacher doesn't know the lesson' or 'She can't make it interesting' or 'She can't manage us, because we aren't interested' or 'Mother, I just don't believe all that stuff.' " Such keen evaluations by the pupils themselves are making it absolutely necessary that we learn to build a school which can command their respect and challenge their intelligence. If we do

not, we need not be surprised if they join the ranks of the young people who find no reality in church or even in religion. We are attempting in this book to think through the whole new approach to teaching so that we may both understand its principles and aims and discover the concrete methods that are needed.

THE FACTORS THAT HAVE BROUGHT CHANGE

Our public schools of today are not like those of the early Americans. Why? Every few decades our methods of teaching children change; in fact, there have been three or four big changes in method since those days. Have you ever thought what brings about such changes? There are two causes:

The society in which we live wants to accomplish certain things through education. As society changes, our aims change and, with them, our method.

We are naturally governed by our idea of what a child is like, how he learns anything. As educators experiment with more and more accuracy, they discover facts about how the child learns and the knowledge of these facts changes our methods.

We will find it helpful to look further into these two causes, so as to understand the change in educational method for today.

A CHANGING SOCIETY

Changed Government. We live in a democracy, for instance. How would education in a democracy be different from that in an autocracy? The fundamental difference is that in an autocracy people need to be trained in two things—in obedience to their civil and religious rulers, and in carrying on the customs and traditions of their parents. In a democracy, each citizen is responsible for an intelligent vote. He helps to make laws, choose leaders, decide national and international questions. He either tolerates or fights a corrupt government. Such a citizen will have to be so educated that he understands what is best for society and can discriminate between good and bad leaders and policies. Because new problems are constantly rising, we cannot train him by telling him what to do in each present situation. We must rather train him to think clearly for himself in a new situation.

Changed Ways of Living. Our daily lives have been tremendously changed in the last decade by science. New inventions have provided us with leisure but at the same time increased the possibili-

ties of recreation and organized activity so that we are rushing constantly from one thing to another. Hundreds of new occupations have been created. Our houses are so full of material possessions that we find it difficult to think of spiritual interests and needs. The movie, the newspaper, the radio have eliminated time and space, so that we now see or hear about an important event anywhere in the world within a few hours after it has happened.

These changes in the things we have and the ways in which we spend our time have brought with them the changes in standards and in ideals which so thoroughly puzzle parents in dealing with their children and churches in facing the task of education. The problems of right and wrong which our children meet are different from those which their parents faced. Our generation accepts with little misgiving the dance and the theater which so horrified our grandparents. But this same generation has a new conscience on decent wages and housing conditions, on the care of homeless children and mental patients, to which their grandparents gave little thought.

Not only have new moral problems arisen, but the old problems are met in new forms. Parents have discovered that they cannot tell their children

how to behave at a party in terms of what was considered right in their day; for while "petting" has the same results regardless of generations, the problem is different. One generation had the kissing games, the other has the frank and open desire for thrills; one had the group, the other gets seclusion.

Does this give us a hint as to the meaning of the saying that education must prepare the child for change? If we lived in an unchanging civilization, we could easily train children for today by teaching them to do exactly what their fathers and grandfathers did. Since we are living in a world of change, we cannot possibly know what problems our children are going to meet, and therefore cannot tell them how to meet them. We must educate children in such a way that they will be able to discover for themselves new ways of meeting new problems.

Inner Controls. Another change in the conditions of the day in which we live and therefore in the type of education we shall need to give our children lies in the change that has taken place from external controls of conduct to inner controls. Two generations ago the majority of people accepted obedience to law as a duty. The fact that a law had been passed made certain activities un-

questionably wrong. This common acceptance of law and duty has passed. Now we discover that the people who keep the law are those who happen to believe in it. When we passed the prohibition law, it did not prevent many who do not believe it to be a good law from doing as they pleased.

We have come to see that the only permanent way in which to affect our civilization for good and to build strong character is to develop what we call "inner controls." We do not want our children to say to their playmates, "I cannot do this because my mother will not let me," or "because I shall be punished if I break the law," but rather "because I see that this is not a good way of living and I do not want to do it." We have not realized that we must develop intelligent convictions as a basis of Christian character.

It is interesting to remember that the Protestant Church was established on the premise that the church was not to decide questions of right and wrong, but that the individual must decide them for himself in his own relationship to God, and that in spite of this fact, we have calmly proceeded to hand down edicts from parents, from church, from state without any attempt to train the individual to do his own thinking. This ability of the

individual to decide for himself with God, as we have said before, will necessitate training him to think, to discover, to discriminate.

All through the country we find people who think they will solve the moral problems of this generation if they hang copies of the Ten Commandments on the schoolroom walls or insist on having these laws memorized. We can no longer depend upon external authority. Our children must discover the reasons why an act is Christian or un-christian; must develop within themselves a desire to live at their best and to help others to live the most abundant life.

Forming a Christian Philosophy of Life. Have you ever thought about a child's philosophy of life —where he gets it and what makes it Christian or un-christian? The child of three years of age has a philosophy. Perhaps it is made up of such convictions as "It pays to get angry and scream when I want something.—I can do things without my mother finding out." When he is a little older he adds other conclusions to it. "Never let another fellow get the best of you.—Hate all people of other races and show them that we are better than they.—The best way to be a strong man is to know how to handle knives and guns.—Get everything you can for yourself."

Where did the child get this philosophy? It rises from the total of all his experiences. These convictions are formed by his experiences in the movies, the schoolyard, the school where he has five different teachers each day, each demanding something different of him in standards of conduct, the home where the attitudes as well as actions of parents point out what seems to them most valuable in life. Frequently a child from a Christian home and church has disclosed anything but a Christian philosophy of life. Why? His experience in the movies, the comic papers, the playground have been quite as real as those in home and church. How was he to distinguish when moral and religious instruction in home and church aimed only at a knowledge of Bible stories and general proverbs and passages that seemed to have little connection with the real incidents of his life?

In the light of the new demands of the complex life of the child, a significant remark was made. A schoolmaster was attending a conference where the question under discussion was "Is the child of today as good as was the child of the last generation?" He made the statement, "The child of today is as good, but the trouble is that he has to be ten times as good." As we look over the be-

wildering array of experiences which a nine-year-old boy or girl has in one week—his experiences with school, club, movie, radio, play and many other situations, we have to agree that the child of today cannot find reality in religion if he has only the preparation of his father.

Is it not clear, then, that the educational method of the past is no longer adequate for the child of today? We shall have to depend not so much on his reciting of Bible texts and stories, as on his increasing ability to think for himself in a new situation in terms of Christian ideals. He must have worship experiences which arouse in him a desire to choose the Christian solution to his problems. The building of a Christian philosophy of life must begin at the points where his philosophy is being formed, namely, in his experiences.

A NEW THEORY OF HOW THE CHILD LEARNS

All this discussion leads naturally to the conclusion to which our educators have come—that a child learns not through memorizing and reciting, but through experience. Chapter II will take up this theory in detail. But we may have a brief view of it here.

The old story of the child who wrote for his

teacher the phrase, "I have gone" one hundred times, and then added the note "Dear Teacher: I have went home" is an illustration that has point here. We are constantly hearing parents say, "I told her that wearing these clothes would result in poor health, but she would not listen to me," or "I told them that certain practices would result in this trouble, but they paid no attention." Young people do not learn through their parents' experience, but through their own, in reality or imagination. Often they can be so guided that they discover in the experiences of others those final results which have not yet come in their own brief lives. Thus they learn by living through these experiences of other people.

Changes in the Public School. The progressive public school of today is changing in accordance with this conclusion to which our two lines of thought have brought us. The experience of the child is made the center of education, of the learning process. It dictates the course of study and the method of teaching.

We look over the list of subjects in the modern public school, and we find that everything that is or should be a part of the child's life has been made a part of the course of study. He learns Safety First to meet his everyday needs in reach-

ing the school; he learns thrift by building a bank account; he learns health because he needs the most recent discoveries concerning food, sleep, cleanliness. The gymnasium is an everyday experience. Art and music and literature build up his appreciation for beauty. Recreatory reading develops possibilities for the best use of leisure time. The child goes from room to room of a thoroughly equipped building to get the best in each experience of life.

Not only are new subjects added, but the school has found that entirely new methods are needed in the old subject. The child cannot laboriously memorize the alphabet and stumble through one reader each year if he is to live in the world of multitudes of books. He must be able to read rapidly and silently. Since there is so much more knowledge than any one person can acquire, he must be able to find information in books. So reading begins with recognition of whole sentences and stories. Many first grade children have a record of reading from twenty to twenty-five books for the first year. Second and third grade children have learned how to use the index and to look up material in different books.

It is fascinating to note the effect of this new point of view on the teaching of geography. When

we were children, we memorized capitals, boundaries, imports and exports. Perhaps we have remembered them, but we learned a good many things which we shall never need to use. In this day of the interdependence of nations, there is a great deal that a child needs to know about geography if he is to be an efficient citizen, but it is not the memorizing of the physical facts about the country. The child is taught to face facts in their relation to life.

Pick up one of the newer geographies and find out how they are written. One day on a school bus I borrowed a child's geography, and, glancing through, I found that such questions as these were being studied about South America: What relation does the United States have with South America? Since rubber is the cause of much of our business relationship, how is the industry conducted? What percentage of American labor is used? What attitudes do the South Americans have toward our country? Are we building a fair and friendly relationship? In answering these questions, the child does, of course, learn a great deal about the climate, the ports, the rivers, the products, but these are not of the greatest importance. He is taught to put first emphasis on the matters which are really important in life.

Thus the modern and progressive public school is teaching the child to live his everyday life efficiently by guiding him through actual experiences of vital importance to him. Because he sees their value and is interested, he puts the greatest of effort into the work. In our best schools of today we shall find the pupils not sitting passively, dully reciting and eagerly watching the clock, but we shall see them entering with whole-hearted effort into the accomplishment of each task.

OUR NEW METHOD IN TEACHING RELIGION

In the light of all this, can we not see that the child who lives through five days a week of this meaningful study, can scarcely be educated religiously by the old method of reciting Bible stories and texts or learning Biblical facts? Is it not clear that we shall be concerned with entering into some actual and valuable experiences in Christian living where teacher and group together seek to find and practice Christian solutions to their problems? In the new method, recitation and mere listening will give way to discussion, to activity, to spontaneous worship. The class will become not passive listeners but eager searchers.

This must be equally true of the teaching of

adults, whose lives are filled day after day with really important concerns of home-making, earning an honest living, having Christian relationships with their neighbors or fellow workers. Yet we try to meet this need with a group of Bible verses chosen by a national committee and ask them to spend their time discussing questions they have heard all their lives in the Sunday School, tacking on a hasty "application." With this lack of fresh experience, we wonder why "we just can't get our adults to take part in discussion. They seem so passive."

Into how many Sunday Schools can one walk and find a class so eager to discover the truth that the teacher has to act only as counselor? In how many can we find a group at worship where we feel that each one is actively trying to put himself into communion with God? Something must be wrong not only with the methods we have used but with the way in which we have used them. Perhaps an examination of the method which Jesus, the Great Teacher, used may throw some light on the problem.

The Method of Jesus. Jesus refused, in spite of the church leaders of his day, to think of religion as something from the past which was perfectly developed and must be handed down just as it

was. He looked first at the needs of the people of his own day and tried to meet them. His stories were not often about Old Testament characters; they were out of the everyday experiences of the people with whom he was living: they were about a father with two sons, a bridegroom at a wedding, a farmer who sowed seed, a judge or a ruler. He insisted on a fresh experience of God for each individual. Did he not warn his friends to beware of the Pharisees, who were so busy at public prayers and tithes and the ceremonies laid down by an ancient law that they had no sympathy for suffering, no appreciation of hearts that hungered after righteousness?

In fact, the greatest opposition against Jesus came from those who insisted that he ought to hand down merely the traditions of the church rather than make any attempt to interpret their real spirit for the lives of the people of his own day. And when they opposed this teaching which seemed so new to them, what did Jesus reply? He must have smiled as he said, "No man puts new wine in old bottles, for the skins burst and the wine is spilled."

Are we not constantly putting the new lives of our young people who are meeting new problems into the old bottles, the ideas of an older genera-

tion, in an attempt to make these new lives conform to our size and style, rather than to find new shapes of their own which might serve their needs better? Perhaps this accounts for the many lives that seem to burst through the old customs and lose all sense of values. If we are ready to help them, they may find valuable new ways of expressing their spiritual experiences.

We must take care that we do not have an Old Testament religion in a New Testament day. If we are desirous of being really Christlike, we shall be far more eager to seek new interpretations of and fresh experiences in religion rather than mere knowledge about the Bible and attendance at the church school.

NEW EMPHASES FOR OUR CHURCH SCHOOLS

We may summarize all that we have been thinking by trying to discover some of the changes in emphasis which will result from this new approach to the teaching of religion:

1. *Uses of the Bible.* Can you see now, for instance, why the Bible is being used so differently in our modern courses of study? We use it, as did Jesus, not as an end in itself but as a means to an end. Christian character does not result from

knowing what is in the Bible, though in the process of building character we shall need to go to the Bible to investigate the experiences which others have had of God and with their fellow men. Some of these experiences will inspire and challenge us, others will show us certain mistakes that have been made and certain principles of life that have been made clear through experience. But we shall go to the Bible for these experiences in the midst of a search of our own to find for our own lives what is good and and true and Christlike.

When the Bible is used in this way, it gains a new meaning, it arouses new interests. I have seen a group of young mothers who are in search of a concept of God which they can give to their children find utterly fresh and fascinating a study of things Jesus said and did, compared with certain Old Testament ideas of God. Their own relationship to God was deepened and quickened, their own ability to pray spontaneously was developed when they found the God whom Jesus revealed.

I have seen a group of high school students become surprised and then reverent before the discovery of the utter beauty in the unfolding and developing understanding of God in the experience of the Hebrew nation when for the first time these students saw the whole story of this group

who persistently sought after God in the midst of a struggle for safety and happiness.

I have seen young people who have attended Sunday School all their lives, who know the stories of the Bible rather well, come to a sudden appreciation of the spiritual experiences of David or Zaccheus or Job or Jesus when in the midst of some vital problem of their own they discover the companionship that lies in the record of another person who went through just such a struggle and in it found God and peace and a new dynamic in living. There was Margaret, for instance.

Margaret came to me at the close of the class one day and said in a tense voice "Are you sure that God knows me?" and when I replied in the affirmative, she said "How do you know? There are reasons why I must be sure." When we sat down that evening to go over the matter, I discovered that she was in truth going through an experience which made it necessary for her to know whether she might be sure of a personal relationship with God.

"You have gone to Sunday School all your life," I said to her. "What makes you so uncertain?"

"When I was in high school," she replied, "I studied astronomy. When I went out and looked

at that vast sky and realized that each one of those lights was a planet, that our world was just another planet in such a great universe, I felt lost. I said, 'It is impossible that the God who made all this knows me.' "

"There was a man long ago," I said, "who had an experience just like that. He didn't know that each star was a planet nor that his own world was round, but as he stood out under the stars at night, he felt the immensity of it and the smallness of himself. And yet at a quiet time, he had an experience within himself that gave him a great conviction, that made him sure that there was possible for him a close fellowship with God. He was so awed by it that he wrote it into a poem which says, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou are mindful of him?' He began to see the greatness of even one life lived in harmony with God." Doubtless, Margaret had read this song many times, but it had never been for her a real experience. The experience method gives new life to the Bible.

2. *Providing Experience.* We must remember, too, that we must start with the pupil's own experience and give it religious meaning. Each age-

group has its own peculiar religious needs and problems which should be our primary concern.

The children are facing, perhaps, an immature conception of God, or an incomplete understanding of what it means to be trustworthy. They are not at all sure that love as a basis of human relationships will be as effective as fighting and revenge. The young people face the apparent conflict between the love of money and the finest ideals of honor, between Christian interracial relations and the approval of society, between a so-called good time socially and the highest ideals of sex relationships. The adults are constantly taking attitudes of one kind or another toward problems of international relations, business ideals, home standards, all of which need to be infused with the spirit of Jesus.

Can the church provide actual experiences which will help the members of the group to discover, desire and practice the Christian solutions to these problems, to grow constantly and naturally in their own spiritual experiences? Here and there the creative teacher is doing just this. Edna Acheson in her book *The Construction of Junior Church School Curricula* gives the record of one such experience after another.

Suppose we want the children to develop a

loyalty to the church, a desire to worship, a consideration of the rights of others. Can we achieve these ends by actual experience?

One church developed just this type of child-centered experience. When a new church school building was built the children saved their own money and took it regularly to the superintendent. They had a conference with the architect and helped to decide the arrangement of rooms. They chose as a group the mottoes to be painted on the walls. They entered upon a study of how the tabernacle and later the temple were made as beautiful as possible by the best gifts of the people, of how each was dedicated to God in a beautiful worship service that meant a great deal to the people. They themselves made a gift for their new rooms. They helped to plan the service of dedication and prepared themselves to conduct visitors through the building and explain its meaning and purpose. When the building was finished, it was in reality their church, a house of God for them, not merely a bit of public property.

In the new building they had more religious experiences. The older children made Christmas decorations for the kindergarten room. The kindergarten sent the Juniors some posters they had made. The Primary children learned to think of

the needs of the younger children when they were planning a party. Thus they are practicing Christian coöperation in their church school life, an admirable preparation for serving on church boards and class committees where we often find most un-christian relationships.

The Teacher's Responsibility. If studying in the Sunday School is to become more than the passive half-hearted activity it now is, if we are to prepare our pupils for a vital Christian experience in this modern day, the teacher will need to study not only the lesson but a great deal more about educational principles and methods than he has ever studied before. If he is to carry out his work in a way that commands the respect of the children who are used to scientific facts and especially prepared teachers, or of the adults who are so busy with really important and vital concerns, he will need to cease depending upon the old way or the easiest way of teaching and to strike out into the newer methods with the best thinking of which he is capable.

The new courses of study are a tremendous help to each teacher in planning for his own group whatever experience they need. In order that the teacher may find that experience which will help his own pupils most, many of the courses sug-

gest several possible plans or a great deal more material than any one class can use. In fact, these courses are written in such detail and so carefully that they themselves will do much to train the teacher in the new method if, once he understands their purpose, he gives them a thorough study and trial.

Many teachers to whom the foregoing explanations have been made have thrown up their hands and said, "It's just too much for me. I'll resign." Yet the very man who says this has learned to give up the horse and buggy and drive the automobile. The very woman who feels herself incapable of changing her teaching method has discarded the washboard for the electric washing machine. How much more readily shall we be willing to give real mental effort to the work which Jesus commissioned us all to do?

CHAPTER II

How Do We Learn?

Cause for Changes in Method. We have been thinking of the causes for the present change in teaching method. Did you ever realize that the method of teaching in the public schools changes every two or three generations and that these changes come about because of new theories of education? Sometimes the educators work out an idea of what education ideally should give to children and then compare it with what is being done; sometimes they study the child himself to discover how he learns. The result of such study and experimentation is a new method of teaching.

It has proved helpful to many Sunday School teachers to examine in a simple way each of the main theories which have had their place in education in the last three hundred years. We shall attempt a brief explanation of each, so that you may understand how we arrived at our present idea of education.

We must remember that each new theory only

gradually becomes a matter of common practice. When a new theory is accepted and the old one disproved by the leaders, the old one still remains in practice for many years in the local schools. As we look at these various theories, you can easily note remnants in the popular thinking of today of many of the ideas long discarded by the educators.

THE OLD THEORIES

Inborn Tendencies in Child Nature. In the early days of our country, the Puritans had a very definite theory of what the child is like and therefore of what kind of education he needs. The child, they said, is born with all his natural tendencies evil. If he were left alone, he would tend to choose the bad. The child must be seen and not heard, they said, because he had nothing of value to say. Again, he must obey unquestioningly because his own ideas were likely to be wrong and those of adults were right. In fact, the more unpleasant a duty the more imperative that it must be done.

Life was serious; play was a waste of time, the child was only a small man or woman who must prepare for the serious business of life as quickly as possible. The girls learned to sew by long hours

over their samplers; the boys chopped wood and carried water. The method of teaching in the school became that of rather meaningless memorizing of the alphabet and the catechism, pages of writing in copy-books, with the humiliation of the dunce-cap and the rod for those who were unwilling or unsuccessful.

This theory was a natural result of the social and religious ideas of the day. Another group, however, has believed that the child's natural tendencies are all good, that we should let him develop these tendencies without too much curbing. More recent studies of child nature have disclosed that the child is born neither good nor bad nor partly good and partly bad, but with a nature that has many possibilities in either direction, depending upon the environment and training. We sometimes still find, however, the conviction that all duty must be unpleasant and all obedience unquestioning.

Formal Discipline. Another theory arose when educators began to make a study of the mind which led to a new theory of learning. It was decided that the mind and brain are divided into sections, each with its own power or faculty. One part was supposed to direct the memory, another part the reasoning, still another the will power. Each

faculty could be developed only by exercise, just as the muscles of the arm are developed. Along with this theory came the practice of phrenology which one still sees in roadside shows, in which the theory is that a person who has the chart can feel anyone's head and tell which powers are best developed.

It was thought, too, that the exercise which the brain needed was abstract subject-matter. Just as wrestling would develop the arm muscles, so the learning of Latin would develop the memory and the study of mathematics would develop the reasoning. While other values were sought through these subjects, the school emphasized this formal training as methods of developing these special faculties. This theory began to break down as people saw that this training of the mind did not prepare the child for life. Often he could reason in mathematics without being able to handle money well; he could memorize Latin without being able to remember certain important facts needed in everyday life. Experiments were made by one psychologist which seemed to prove that the powers of the mind are not thus divided, that one simple act might involve all the powers. So when a new theory of the mind was developed, people were ready to discard this one. Strange to say, however,

we still find some schools boasting of their emphasis on the "subjects that discipline the mind."

Repeating the Race Development. The rise of the science which traced the development of the race led to a third theory which had a brief influence. A great deal of observation of the traits which the child shows at different ages and the behavior that seems to be natural to him led some educators to believe that the child in his development goes through all the stages through which the race has gone. For instance, at one early stage man was a caveman, with self-preservation and the accumulation of his own possessions as his only interests. This is what we find in a small child. So they concluded that we could not expect him to become able to share, to coöperate at this age, but that we should have to let him be at this period only that which was natural to him. As he passed out of this stage he would naturally outgrow these tendencies. In fact, we should encourage him to be something of a savage, because if he gets it "out of his system" now he will develop normally in the next period. So the schools studied Indian life and the mothers bought tents and weapons of warfare.

Later on, these educators said, when he is in the middle grades, the child repeats the period

when the race was learning so rapidly. Therefore that period becomes the one in which his mind is to be stocked full of all that we want him ever to know. Not until the child has reached high school, they believed, is he ready to appreciate some of the altruistic impulses, is he capable of coöperation and self-sacrifice. Further experiment with the instincts and characteristics of children soon led educators to believe that periods are not thus definitely marked off and that certain traits, like the tendency to fight, do not appear in only one stage of development but throughout the growth of the child. We have come to see that we do not have to wait until the child is nearly grown to develop his social traits.

Although this theory was long ago discarded, we still see some effects of it. How often have you heard parents say, "I am sorry that my boy is so cruel, but he is just going through that stage"? Thus we often excuse undesirable traits and allow them to become habitual at a time when we might guide the child to feel and to practice all that is social and Christian.

The Theory By Which We Were Taught. One of the most widely used theories is the one which was in general practice when we were growing up and which is now being discarded in the most pro-

gressive schools. It was developed by Herbart and is known as the Herbartian theory. This theory holds that the child learns only the knowledge that is presented to him in a logical arrangement. When he accepts this knowledge and is able to give it back in the same form in which it was given to him, he has learned it. The teacher, then, must present to the child in a logical way whatever she wants him to learn. The pupil must go over and over it until he can give it back. The famous five steps of teaching belong to this method.

Unfortunately it was by this method that most of us were taught. When our teacher said to us, "Take the next ten pages of history," she assigned pages on which the bare facts were arranged in logical order. We literally "took it" as we would take a dose of medicine. We read the pages over and over in order to retain the words, and if we were uncertain of our ability to recite what the book gave, we asked a parent to hear us "say our lesson" in order that we might have it for the next day. The material that we read might have no meaning for us; still we considered that it was learned because we could recite it. Our teachers held that it was not important that we should understand all that we learned. Our minds were storehouses that could be stocked with riches which

could easily be recalled when, as adults, we found a need for it. Have you discovered that the method of working partial payments came back to you when you needed it? Can you give the boundaries of any country in South America or Africa?

A great many experiments have been carried on to prove that this theory of learning is not effective and adequate. One writer tells of a class of freshmen entering high school who were given in September the same test which they passed in June in leaving the eighth grade. It was found that their grades were 75 per cent lower in the September test. If they retained only 25 per cent of what they learned, how much would they be able to retain in later years? It was found that a child who has learned at school to add and subtract often cannot tell whether he has received correct change at the grocery. And in the field of character and religion, we know that the penitentiaries contain hundreds of prisoners who know the Ten Commandments but who have not been able to make them practical in their own lives.

THE NEW THEORY

The Experience Theory. More recently a few educators, such as Dr. John Dewey, Dr. Edward Thorndike and others, started the experimentation

and thinking which has developed our new approach to teaching. They studied how the child learns those things which he can retain for use; what he needs to learn in order to be prepared for living. It became more and more clear to them that the child is born neither with tendencies that are all good or all bad, but that he is a bundle of possibilities. He may become good or bad, but the kind of person he becomes, the direction he chooses depends largely upon what he learns by *experience*.

We may see this to be true by a simple illustration. A baby is lying in a cradle. Nearby is a bottle of milk. The baby wants it but he has had no experience in getting what he wants. He tries all the possibilities he has. He wrinkles up his face and sucks with his lips. If some one nearby sees him and hands him the bottle, he has discovered a way of getting his food. If he is left alone and this first trial does not work, he waves his hands, kicks his feet, wriggles his entire body—but that does not bring his bottle. He tries crying. In many cases this action brings help and the method which he gradually develops after several experiences is that of crying for what he wants. But perhaps crying does not bring some one. After a good many possibilities have been tried, the little hand in waving about happens to touch the bottle, the fin-

gers close about it and the baby discovers that he can pull it toward himself. If he is so fortunate as not to have too many people to wait upon him, he gradually comes to expect to get things for himself and is on the way toward becoming a self-reliant child.

Any of us who have watched a baby in his first toddling about the house know how true it is that he learns everything by experience. He cannot understand, even if his mother tells him, that he must not squeeze the kitty until an unpleasant experience makes him remember it. Watching with his keen little eyes, he discovers whether his acts are approved or disapproved by mother, and if the atmosphere of the home is friendly and loving, he learns by experience to continue doing those things which please mother and to discontinue doing things which cause pain or displeasure.

Experience as a Basis for Character. Very often the things which we think the children have inherited have been learned after all by experience. A baby girl was to be left with a neighbor one evening while the parents went to the moving pictures. But the baby was restless and wanted to go. She tried methods of coaxing, but to no avail. Finally she tried screaming and developed such a tantrum that the parents took her with them be-

cause they were afraid to leave her. The next time she wanted something, she used the same method. It is not surprising that when the girl was twelve, she flew into a rage whenever anyone crossed her. And I suppose her mother is wondering from which side of the family the child has inherited her temper!

In our school life, we can see children learning in this same way. They enter a new classroom in September. For the first half day they are busy discovering from experience what kind of conduct will be accepted in this room. They try out one thing after another and watch the results.

I visited at one time a Junior Department where the atmosphere was that of the confusion and inattention found in the average Sunday School. The superintendent was sure nothing could be done about it. I was asked to lead the group on the following Sunday. Nothing was said about conduct, but the children became deeply interested in the interpretation of a hymn. When the group filed out quietly at the close of a splendid hour, the superintendent remarked, "You were lucky today. Sometimes they are quiet like that." She did not see that their conduct had been determined by their interest in and sense of value of the work. If their regular experiences in that

church had challenged their best thinking and real interests, they would have developed an attitude of serious study and worship. Their present attitude of play and fun was a result of another kind of experience.

Living Through Others' Experiences. Perhaps you are asking whether we must always learn by our own experience and never by the experience of others. There are, it seems to me, two conditions under which we learn from others. A mother tells the children not to run across the street. They are careless about it. Finally one boy is struck by an automobile and has a leg broken. The little sister who sees the accident, the pain of the brother, the troubled faces of parents and the added difficulties for the whole household in the days that follow has learned not to cross the street. She learned because she *lived through* the other child's experience.

If a mother had read in the newspaper of this accident and had told her children about it merely as a warning for themselves, would they have "learned" it? Most mothers and teachers know they would not. Such warnings seem to "go in one ear and out the other." The reason for this is that unless the child lives through the experience of this other person in his own imagination and

finds some contact with it in his personal experience, he has not "learned" it and therefore will not practice it.

Our best public schools have learned this lesson. No longer do they teach the bare facts of history, but the children are given opportunities to live through the experiences of others. A sixth grade teacher who wanted to teach the causes of the Revolution did not assign page numbers. Instead, her children pulled their chairs to the wall and drew an immense map of the colonies covering the whole floor of the schoolroom. On that map villages sprang up, with houses and churches and little dolls dressed in the manner of that day. When the life of the village had been reproduced in this way, the children took up the situation and dramatized the incidents of the daily life of the colonists. The teacher was always alert for opportunities to help the children understand the real problems which these people faced and to feel with them the growing desire for independence. When these children finished their year's work they could not, perhaps, name all of the battles that had been fought, but they had the kind of an understanding of history which makes for the most intelligent citizenship.

We all recognize that the conduct of a Junior

child may be affected by the books he reads. He begins to imitate the character he loves. Did he not live through the experience of this other person, share all his desires and triumphs and humiliations? Did he not see how certain conduct leads directly to certain results? He can learn from the experience of others if he lives through them with understanding and feeling. This fact should make us careful in helping the child to choose the books he reads and the movies he sees. It should show us, too, that he will find helpful for his own life only those experiences of the men and women of Bible story into which he can enter with understanding and feeling, so that he gains from these experiences the same insight into life and conclusions about life which the character or the writer did. This eliminates some of the stories we have used but makes others far more significant.

Having a Background of Experience. There is a second factor necessary if I am to learn from the experience of others. Suppose that I do not know how to cook. I am seated at a luncheon with a group of housewives and one says to the hostess, "How did you make this cake?" The recipe is given orally and the housewives nod their heads. They can go home and reproduce that cake, perhaps they can even improve upon it by their own

creativeness, but I can do neither one because I have no background of experience in making cakes. The recipe is "all Greek" to me because I myself have never lived through the process of cake-making.

How very much of our teaching in Sunday School is a matter of handing over some one else's experience which our children can neither reproduce nor use creatively because there is no background for it in their own experience. Many of the experiences of Moses, of David, of Jesus will have so little in common with those of the pupil that they make no real change in his way of thinking and living. On the other hand, there will be experiences of present-day boys and girls, men and women, which point so clearly to spiritual values discovered and which are so nearly like his own experiences that he will be greatly helped by them. But when we follow the needs of the pupil, we do discover new values in many Bible stories we have scarcely used before. Some of the familiar stories take on new meaning and some quite unfamiliar passages become useful.

Purpose in Learning. If you try to tell a friend what you think he ought to do, you know how unwelcome such advice usually is. But if he is puzzled or discouraged and comes to you, he is ready to

learn. Our educators tell us that this *purpose to learn* has a great deal to do with the value of what we learn, the use to which we put it. When we enter a Sunday School and see a group of adults or young people idly gazing around or looking bored or conversing in undertones while the teacher is vainly trying to keep their attention on lessons from the Bible, we know at once that these lessons are chosen and used without any association with the purpose of the learner.

There are some church schools you may enter in which you will find the pupils, young or old, eagerly discussing, listening, working, searching for records of certain experiences. The children may have discovered that they cannot find the Bible stories they want to read until they grow more familiar with the index and the approximate position of each book, so they are attacking this bit of learning with vigor. The young people may be eagerly presenting and comparing facts concerning the status of the peace movement because they have sensed that it is one of the most important developments toward a Christian world. A group of young parents have a real problem which makes them attend with intense interest to the presentations of certain factors of Christian character-building.

We need to give a great deal of attention to the purpose of the learner; it is the key to his interest and effort and to the effectiveness of what he learns.

How Much Knowledge Does He Need? The temptation for teachers holding the older theory has always been to fill the mental storehouses of the pupils with all of the beautiful, valuable knowledge which the world has produced. Since it has been discovered that they really do not retain much of this, we begin to ask, "How shall we choose what he should learn?" Dr. Wieman [1] has answered this question very concisely. He says, "The only kind of knowledge worth having is the knowledge that can be used in solving the important problems of life. All other knowledge is excess baggage. . . . Give him [the man who has accumulated much knowledge] a problem to solve —a vital problem that requires profound and accurate thinking. You can see his knowledge bulge and billow and roll, but he cannot land a knockout blow on the solar plexus of the problem.

"To be educated means to know how to be wisely ignorant. The educated man does not know all the facts, but he knows what facts are worth

[1] Wieman, Henry N., *Methods of Private Religious Living*, p. 96. (Used by permission of the Macmillan Co., publishers.)

knowing and what facts are not worth knowing. He knows where to go to get information when he needs it. But above all, he knows how to keep himself in sublime ignorance of that overwhelming mass of petty and worthless matters which distract a man from the important issues of life and render him intellectually and spiritually degenerate."

This point of view would seem to lead us to conclude that much of the Biblical knowledge we have insisted upon, some of the memory work and drill, could be eliminated. It would make us more eager, however, to study the lives of the particular pupils in our group, be they children or adults, to discover just what Biblical and other knowledge is really needed in order to develop the best relationship to God, the desire for and skill in working toward individual Christian character or group Christian living, or the other objectives of Christian education. Then, if we will confine ourselves to the best use of this necessary knowledge, we shall find our pupils able to use it in solving their own problems.

What Form of Knowledge is Most Helpful? The Herbartian theory gave to children only the organized results of what the race has discovered about arithmetic or geography or history. The

multiplication table is a result of human experience. The alphabet is the logical arrangement of letters taken out of words that were said long before the alphabet was written. We are discovering that the most meaningful way for children to learn is to enter into the very experiences which led people to draw up certain bodies of knowledge rather than merely to memorize the results of that experience.

So today we do not start our children in reading by having them memorize the alphabet. Our modern teachers tell a story which the children love and when they have heard it may times, a part of the story is put on the blackboard and the children learn to recognize whole words and sentences just as they learn to recognize the faces of new acquaintances. Before long they are reading whole stories and books. That is why many of our first grade children read twenty-five books during their first year in school.

In the teaching of religion, then, if we want our pupils to have real experiences we shall be concerned not so much with the chronological arrangement of material as with gathering together for his study the experiences of men of long-ago and now which will help him as he tries to find the best solution to some question of living, or

praying, or working with God or with other men which they also faced. There will be a time in his experience, however, when he will need to see the life of Jesus as a whole or the Old Testament story as a whole in order to get a larger point of view of the significance of a personality or of a national development. Then the chronological arrangement becomes a real experience to him because of his purpose or sense of need.

Building Appreciations. In religion appreciations are as important as knowledge. When the school wants the child to appreciate a modern comfort such as electric light or books, it takes the child on a journey from the earliest days when man discovered how to make fire and light to serve his need, or scratched his first picture on a rock. Through all the discoveries and improvements which man made as he learned to use the resources of God's world up to the present time the child travels, with the joy of discovery in his heart. After such an experience, will he ever be able to look at the electric light bulb or the book or the radio with the bored air of a modern or will he always be invested with a sense of wonder and gratitude and obligation? Science and religion can go hand in hand in helping the child to see God

and men working together to create a better universe.

The experience-centered method of education, summed up, believes that the child, who is born with certain tendencies, has possibilities for good or bad and will grow into whatever person he becomes through the experience he has. The teacher's task is to guide him through experiences which will result in the habits, ideals, attitudes, desires which are truly Christian. She is more concerned with the needs of his growing personality than with the amount he learns about the past, though she will lead him through an experience of the past whenever it will be of service to him. This explains why our modern courses of study often choose a story of the religious experience of a modern boy or girl who had a problem very much like that of the child in our classes rather than the story of a moral lesson learned by the Hebrew people long ago, in a different country and with a different manner of living. Often the Bible story is so full of unfamiliar ways of living that our child cannot enter into the experience and learn the same moral lesson for himself, though often, again, it is simple and clear and can be used. Knowing Jesus, we feel that God is more con-

cerned that each of us should have a fresh religious experience of our own than that we should know only about those of others.

The chapters that follow will develop all that this theory means to the teaching in the church school. Do we not see, however, that it will mean a radical change from our emphasis on insisting only that the children sit still while the story is told or the explanation of Scripture made by the teacher, so that he can later answer the questions which she asks? Anyone who watches the passive boredom or active inattention going on constantly in our Sunday Schools cannot help seeing that this method is anything but effective. We shall put our effort rather on leading the pupils through experiences which will give them an understanding of spiritual truth which can be creatively used in building the finest Christian lives and world for today.

CHAPTER III

How Are Habits of Character and Religion Formed?

I VISIT a Sunday School Junior department. The superintendent talks with me at the close of the session. "I know things aren't as they should be," she apologizes. "The children have bad habits of irreverence and inattention. They have the habit of going noisily to their classes. They don't seem to realize that this is God's house or that they disturb others. And we can't get them into the habit of coming on time or the habit of studying their lesson during the week. But I guess we can't expect to teach them those things, can we?"

Our teachers and parents are all concerned about habit formation, and well they may be, since habit is a part of all we do. In the last few years the educators who have been studying habits have come to some conclusions very different from those we have long held.

The old idea of the way in which habits are

built was simple. We merely taught a child *how* to do what was required and then saw that it was done over and over until, as we used to say, "it came natural to him." In public school the misspelled word was written twenty-five times, at home the child was sent from the table day after day to wash his hands until the patience of his mother was tried. At school or at home the child who lost his temper was guided into a habit of control by various rewards and punishments which placed upon him the burden of remembering what he must do. The church leaders have insisted that we build the habit of church attendance by requiring, week after week, the physical presence of the child in the pew throughout the adult worship service until he became so used to being there that he raised no question as to whether or not he should attend.

BUILDING INTELLIGENT HABITS

Even if we were successful in building habits by this method, we can see that unquestioning repetition of an act determined by the parent or teacher is not the best training for living in a Christian democracy. In order to live in the modern day of changing customs and in a democracy where each man must take his own attitudes and decide

his own vote, we need, rather, habits that are based on understanding and ideal, on conviction and desire. So we shall work toward a different kind of habit.

What the new kind of habit is to be like and how it is to be formed we can best determine by an observation of some concrete cases.

Five-year-old Helen has formed a particular habit of losing her temper; we want to build the habit of self-control. First, we must observe her present habit. Is it made up only of what Helen does—of stamping her foot or screaming or saying hateful things? We shall notice that she behaves somewhat differently, according to the people who are in the room. There is the mother who gives in easily, the brother who fights back, the sister who argues with her, the teacher who ignores the demonstration. Helen has had to work out a different way of acting with each one of these. She is intent upon getting certain things for herself, so that in some cases her screaming has to give way to coaxing or to control.

John, we will say, is a discourteous boy. Does this mean that he does the same thing over and over? He is discourteous to his teacher when he says impertinent things, to his mother when he fails to greet her guests or when he leaves the

newspaper strewn over the floor, to his playmate when he contradicts him abruptly. So there is no such thing as discourtesy in general, for he may do one of these things and fail to do another. We want him, we will say, to learn the habit of courtesy. Will it mean that we will teach him to do a certain thing over and over, or will he have to do many very different things? Are there times when he would even need to act discourteously, as when an older boy is teasing a little girl?

These illustrations call our attention to several facts concerning habit formation:

> The habit is always a part of a larger situation that involves people, places, and things; and no two situations are just alike.
>
> The person with a particular habit has to *think* in order to get the same result in each situation. All the really important habits require thinking.
>
> The habit is not, then, just a matter of doing something so many times that he does not have to think about it. We shall not build habits by merely having children repeat a certain action many times.

How shall Helen's habit of self-control, for instance, be built? How will the teacher or parent need to help her?

1. *Seeing Consequences.* She must begin to see the result or consequence of a particular action or habit. By training her to watch for these results, she can discover for herself that losing her temper is a weak way of getting what she wants, that this makes a weak person of her. A wise leader will help her to see the effect on other people in the home or school when she is angry. She can be helped to discover the final result by coming to know personally or to read about people who have few friends and little happiness because of this weakness. She needs some one who will actually suggest better ways of getting the results she is seeking in every instance.

2. *Desire for the Greatest Good.* As Helen discovers all this, she will begin to desire for herself the finest and strongest personality, a happy relationship in her family, school or play group. She will begin to be concerned about the greatest good of others as well as of herself, discovering how her own happiness is bound up with that of others, how life goes on with a loving God at the center of it, a God able and willing to help her

when she asks for strength. She will become increasingly Christian.

3. *Consistent Practice.* But Helen is immature. She is not old enough to practice consistently what she understands and really desires to do. The teacher or parent will need to help her to secure this consistent practice by recalling these things to her at crucial moments, by holding her firmly to her new resolution, or better, by helping her to make a chart on which she will check her daily progress. With the concrete reminder before her she will try to build these habits which she really desires but finds difficult to work out.

Building Attitudes. In studying Helen's habits we shall notice that a habit of doing a particular thing is really caused by her habit or way of thinking about life, about others, about accomplishing things or securing what she wants. These *habits of thinking* or attitudes have to be changed right along with the habit of action. In fact, the roots of most of these habits we wish to change lie in the attitude. The class is inattentive because the work is uninteresting or lacking in challenge. The girl quarrels with her brother because it gives her satisfaction to feel that she can conquer him. The attitude toward the school and toward the brother will have to be changed. Many

of the problems that come from wrong attitudes we do not even recognize. The child's attitudes toward other races, toward working for rewards, toward enjoyment of the movies, toward care of property—these are the things that should concern us more than the acts that result from them.

Studying the Present Attitudes. Note, too, that when we start to build a new habit we do not begin with a fresh page, with a child passively waiting for a habit. Rather, we have something that is already going on in a certain way. It is because he feels as he does that he chooses to do certain things instead of others. We shall have to study the causes of the present habit or the present attitudes and interests before we can begin to build a new habit.

For instance, we say that our children have no sense of reverence. Again we must look at the whole situation to find what has built up their present undesirable attitude. Do the adults whom they see in church show reverence? Does the leader of the children's group have the vitality and strength that come from an actual experience of religion in her own life? Have the children had some vital experiences in worship which have brought them so close to a feeling of the presence of God that they felt hushed and reverent before

Him? Does the appearance of the room contribute to a strong reminder of the presence of God? Are the children being led into some experience which makes them feel the church as a great institution and share with adults the deep sense of loyalty and responsibility and love for the church which is one foundation of reverence?

Like the little girl who whispered to me at the close of her first session in a new type of school "Is this a school where you are supposed to whisper?" the children are constantly evaluating their situations and building their habits on the basis of their conclusions. Can we, then, secure reverence by merely telling them that this is the house of God or must we provide actual experiences in reverence?

Forming More Than One Habit at a Time. Another fact about habit formation is that we usually form more than one habit at a time. John was a child who was made to attend church regularly when he was too young to understand the Scripture, the anthem, or the sermon. "Church" meant a long, long time when he sat still and counted the pipes in the organ or scribbled on paper supplied by a somewhat sympathetic parent or watched the gestures of the preacher. Week after week and year after year he sat in this church dreaming and

thinking of all sorts of things. When he grew older some of his boy friends said, "I am through with the church, I have had so much of it that I never want to attend again." But religion was real in John's home. He figured that there must be something in the church that he must keep in touch with, so he continued to attend. Now John is a father sitting through the church service every Sunday with his mind on business, on golf, on all sorts of things. The habit of inattention built up through these long years is a part of his habit of church attendance which he cannot shake off. Unless we are careful to choose habits for which the child is ready in his own development, we shall often build undesirable habits and attitudes as well as good ones.

John's little boy Frank attends church in a different way. A wise teacher of children has seen that he needs a church experience so full of the presence of God and of meaning for the child that he may have a really religious experience. While John sits in the adult pew, Frank is with the other children in the church school building. "Church" for Frank and his friends means a period of study where, through discussion and activity, they discover some of the great truths of life. Then there is a beautiful worship service that expresses

in hymns, prayers and stories which the boy can understand the thoughts, feelings and conclusions to which he has come. Sometimes Frank's worship is held in the church auditorium with the preacher and the choir present. Already Frank has said to his father "Church is a wonderful place, isn't it, daddy? Mrs. Smith says that when I am sixteen I can understand the grown-up sermons and that then I shall be ready to attend that part of the church."

The same fact can be seen in many home situations. A father, mother and two sons went camping. The parents wanted the boys to learn to take their share of responsibility for the work of the group, so they assigned daily duties to each one. But the woods called and somehow the boys slipped out after breakfast without doing their share. The parents decided that since home work did not have a strong natural appeal, they could build the habit of responsibility for work only by changing the appeal. So they offered to pay for the work done by each boy. After that, the work was promptly done. The question is whether they actually developed the habit of responsibility in the boys or whether it was the habit of working only for pay instead of for the happiness of the group, whether they formed the attitude of sharing

home responsibility or the habit of thinking that all responsibility belonged to the parents and not to the children. So one habit may actually counteract another.

When we give rewards for attendance or memory work, then, we may well question whether the habit built is that of attendance or of expecting reward, of learning the beautiful thoughts of others because they will help us or of competition with other groups for the mere fun of competition. So when we desire to build a habit, we must look carefully through the whole situation to see that every factor of the situation builds the best kind of habits.

Forming Fixed Habits or Forming Intelligent Habits. There is one more important thing for us to discover about habits. All leaders should know that story that children love, of the little boy, Epaminondas,[1] whose aunt gave him various things to take home to his mother. Each thing he took home he carried in such a way as to lose or damage it. After each experience his mother told him what he should have done. The next time he carried the new gift in the way she had told him to carry the last gift, but this always proved

[1] Found in *How to Tell Stories to Children*, by Sara Cone Bryant.

to be the wrong way for this particular thing and so he lost or destroyed it, too.

This story is a very good illustration of the dangers of what we call "fixed habits." We try to build a good habit by having the child do a particular thing, forgetting that the best habits are not these routine matters but are intelligent habits in which the child achieves love, self-control, unselfishness in different kinds of situations by thinking for himself how to get that result in each particular situation.

For instance, we want John to live with love to others as Jesus did. Perhaps an older boy strikes his little sister, or his own best friend tells lies about him, or his mother is willing to do things constantly for him without asking him for help, or his friend asks him to be loyal and not to "tell on him." In every case living with love means to do a different thing. John will need to think each case through by itself.

These are the larger habits that depend, as we have shown before, on being able to understand life, to see consequences, to desire the best for one's self and the group. If we begin to help our children to build the larger habits by achieving the best results in each situation, we shall be building intelligent Christian character.

Problems That Arise. We must examine more closely the methods of building habits. The old method was to *teach the principles* and leave to the child the business of discovering what should be done in each situation. We teach the Ten Commandments, the child decides that he wants to be honest, and, presto, the task of teaching honesty is done!

A recent school of thought has shown us the error of this way by convincing us that there is no such thing as "honesty"; instead, there are many honesties. There is honesty with money, with borrowed articles, with public property, honesty toward corporations, toward one's self. The child does not decide what to do in each case with the general principle in mind. He does not say, "What shall I do to be honest?" but rather. "What is the best way to act in this situation?" He may not even realize that the given situation involves honesty. We all know church members who are dishonest in business or in personal relations without realizing that they are dishonest.

The conclusion of many educators is that we build up the child's idea of honesty by helping him to discover that each of these concrete situations involves honesty and to discover the ulti-

mate results and the most Christian solution for each. This understanding of honesty will develop because of these varied experiences. Finally he will be able to think through a new situation by the help of what he has learned in these previous ones.

The method of teaching principles only does not take account of the fact that often the situation which we face is not a simple question of honesty but may have in it two or more problems involving conflicting duties or loyalties. The boy must decide between loyalty to school authority and loyalty to a guilty friend. The girl must decide between telling the truth and deeply wounding a friend. The baby has to choose between obeying mother's command and disobeying to escape a sudden danger that rises when mother is not there.

One writer [2] has called our attention to the fact that while we are constantly trying to get *more* honesty, more truth-telling and more of the other traits, too much truth-telling may be cruel, too much sympathy may encourage crime. What we need is quality, not quantity; an intelligent choice in the light of a certain ideal.

We would teach honesty, then, by helping the child to discover the best solution to each prob-

[2] Bode, B. H., *Conflicting Psychologies of Learning.*

lem of honesty which he faces and slowly to form from the sum total of all these experiences an idea of what it means to be honest. He will be led to discover consequences, compare values, and choose as intelligently as his understanding permits. If he is too young to understand all these things, the mother or teacher will help him to practice the best way of acting, sometimes through play or imagination securing the results. A dislike of going to bed can be changed by making a game of it; washing the teeth can be transformed through the use of imagination. But at each time, we must help the child to see as much as he can understand of the reasons why these things are done, so that his choice becomes increasingly conscious and intelligent.

A mother whose little boy Bobby was very selfish in his play suggested that he and she should give some parties to his little friends. The anticipated joy of the party made him eager to do it. But they prepared for each party by planning just what Bobby would do for his guests—how he would pass the food, divide the toys, take the wraps. "We want them to be happy, and this will make them happy" was the only reason he could understand. So the parties progressed and Bobby learned through repeated practice to be unselfish.

Slowly, a little more with each party experience, and because mother commented now and then on how splendid it was to share, Bobby developed a habit of thinking as well as of acting so that he is likely to choose wisely when he visits the home of one of his friends and is not with his mother.

THE USE OF STORIES IN HABIT FORMATION

In church and home we are constantly using stories as a part of our program of habit formation. The story is valuable because through it John enters into the experience of another person and begins to see life through his eyes. The story should help John, just as did the discussion, to gain a clearer understanding of the ultimate results of an act, to see in concrete terms the beauty and strength that lie in certain ideals, to make Christian attitudes and conduct desirable because he understands and sees these things. It should help him to make an intelligent choice, not a choice based on mere imitation of a character that is appealing.

Examine a number of stories you have told and see if they do this. Reduce their main ideas to one sentence each and you will find that we are de-

pending on some inferior motives or purposes for conduct. You will find:

"the boy had a chance to cheat, but—he did not, and all turned out well." You are depending here on mere imitation of the character and building the false expectation that right doing always brings pleasant results.

or "the boy had a chance to cheat—but he could not swallow the lump in his throat," or "he felt so uncomfortable that he decided not to." Whether our child feels uncomfortable or not depends entirely on his home training and other past experience. A good many children are not greatly bothered by lumps in their throats.

or "he was tempted to cheat—but he remembered a Bible verse that tells how God dislikes the cheater." Even this is weak, for we are building external controls like a set of laws which he must be sure to remember whether he understands them or not. This does not make for intelligent choice. He must see why such an act is wrong—to himself, to others, and know that God approves of those things which are for the highest development of each one of us and all of us as we live together.

On what basis do we want John to decide to do right? Shall it be mere imitation of the hero of the story, or a vague desire to do what he feels is right without knowing why, or the external control of the approval of God or mother or society? Or shall we tell stories that add to his insight into life so that he may choose intelligently?

For instance, in our Dayton Week-day Schools of Religion we wanted to use a story we had found. It told of a boy whose father had offered him a camping trip if he made a certain average in arithmetic. The average finally depended on a perfect score on the final examination. There was one problem he could not solve. He was tempted to cheat. He felt so uncomfortable and was so conscious of a Bible verse telling of God's disapproval of cheating that at the last moment he worked the problem as it seemed right to him. The story closed by arranging the situation so that he got 100 after all, and secured the trip.

We felt that this story not only failed to provide the most intelligent choice but failed in portraying the kind of results which we usually get in life. The boy who is honest does not always get 100 and a camping trip. What will this story do to the child who expects immediately pleasant results to follow right-doing?

We revised the story. The boy tried to decide whether or not to cheat. The camping trip meant so much. He thought of his father—straightforward, dependable. What difference would it make in his fine friendship with his father if he should cheat to get the reward? He saw values and consequences; the highest value was his own integrity. He prayed that God would give him strength not to cheat—he was sure God was on the side of the finest values. He missed the camping trip, but the father learned how the boy had met the chance to cheat and offered him an opportunity to do some responsible errands for him. The result and reward were his father's greater trust, which is the reward life usually gives.

Character should be built not on emotional sentiments but on intelligent choice. We should not hesitate, then, to revise a story by adding ideas which will reveal the understanding and insight of the characters, and thus make it possible for John to forecast the results of his own possible ways of living and choose those in harmony with the highest ideals and finest results.

We might summarize all that we have been thinking together by saying that all of life depends on habit. We tend to depend on habits for

deciding what we do, how we feel, what and how we think. The best habits are intelligent, depending on the child's understanding of the consequences and his choice of the action that secures the highest values. The best habits are not a fixed, routine way of doing a particular thing, but a larger aim of finding the particular thing to do that secures certain results that are worth while. As we help the child to do the Christian thing in each situation, we shall at the same time take care to build up his understanding of the ideal of Jesus for the Kingdom of God on earth, and make him eager to contribute to this growth of a Christian world.

What do these conclusions mean to us as Sunday School teachers? They mean that we shall have to put much emphasis on careful discussions so that the pupils really understand the problems and come to their own convictions. They mean that we shall choose our stories and worship materials on this same intelligent basis. They mean, too, that we shall need to give the pupils in the Sunday School hour and in activities of the class through the week many opportunities to evaluate their conduct, to discover which way of living together is most worth while, and to practice consistently that way which they have chosen. This puts as much if

not more emphasis, then, on the things which happen outside the text book than on the materials of the course of study. The two lines of development must go hand in hand.

We shall see at once, then, that the building of intelligent habits of action and of thinking is much more important, takes a much longer time, and a greater amount of skill, than merely teaching information that is to be learned and repeated back to the teacher. In this generation, the task of the church school has become so much more difficult and so much larger that it demands on the part of the teacher a determination to prepare adequately for the work of building habits. It means study as well as consecration, skill as well as personality.

CHAPTER IV

What Does Religious Education Aim To Do?

IF I should take a vote of several hundred Sunday School teachers on the question "What is the Sunday School for, what is it trying to do?" the most frequent answer would be "To teach the Bible." So many of us have used this phrase without thinking what we really mean by it that I should like to point out some of the facts we have not considered.

First, the real reason why we teach the Bible is not that it is interesting history or beautiful literature; we are not thinking of the Bible as an end in itself. Our real aim is to teach the Bible in such a way as to bring about a personal worship of God, a personal relationship to Christ as Saviour, and a personal experience in Christian living.

Second, we do recognize that if a pupil has merely a knowledge of what is in the Bible it does not guarantee a personal religious experience; that, as we have been discovering in preceding

chapters, we shall need to lead him into actual experiences of God and Christian relationships with other people. In this process we shall find the experience of the Hebrews a help and an inspiration.

Third, Dr. Coe [1] has called attention to the fact that we have tried to secure the best religious life for today by transmitting without change the religious experience of the people of a past day—by handing down a perfect and finished way of thinking about God and life. This transmissive theory implies the Herbartian method —a mere reciting of what was found in the book. It is Dr. Coe's conviction that we must think of God as continuously creating a better universe. The Biblical record shows a steady progress in the Hebrews' conception of God, in their ideals of human relations, in their standards of right conduct. Are we not to expect that God would have us continue this progress so that we can work with him in creating a better world?

A theory of education that prepares the pupils to take part in this continual progress is creative rather than transmissive. It will stress not the recitation but the pupil's own discovery of best ways of living and of highest ideas of God by experimenting,

[1] Coe, *What is Christian Education?* (Published by Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York.)

comparing, evaluating. Its approach to the Bible will be that of studying the spiritual experiences of men of the past in order to conserve and use those spiritual resources that are of permanent value and to improve upon those interpretations that were grounded in ideas of an earlier day which have now been outgrown. Even so late a teacher as Paul, for instance, gives descriptions of Christian attitudes which we need today side by side with admonitions concerning the use of meat offered to idols, the peculiar clothing and position of women, which belong to a day beyond which we have progressed.

But perhaps we say, "If our aim is not merely to teach the Bible, how shall we know when we have accomplished our work? If we are trying to develop Christian experience, how shall we avoid a narrow conception of Christianity and really develop all that we mean today by the term 'Christian'?"

One helpful set of aims for the church school of today has been developed by Dr. Paul H. Vieth [2] for the International Council of Religious Educa-

[2] Vieth, Paul H., *Objectives in Religious Education* (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1930). See also *The Development of a Curriculum of Religious Education*, a pamphlet published by the International Council of Religious Education, 203 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago.

tion. These aims may be used to check our experiences with the pupils so that we may cover the various phases of Christian development. Some teachers have found it helpful to analyze the course of study they are teaching to discover how many of these objectives are dealt with. Others plan the whole program of study, worship, service and social activities and the pupil's part in the

~~We shall consider each of these seven objectives~~ It may be found helpful to look back over one quarter or forward into the next and ask ourselves the question, "Has our total experience as a class helped John or Helen or the group as a whole to make progress in this objective or that one? How may it do so?"

We shall consider each of these seven objectives individually to discover what it involves for our teaching in the church school.

1. *Does our program of religious education lead the pupils into a personal relation with God?* It is John's sense of relationship to God rather than knowledge about Him that lies at the heart of all his religious experience. In this day of science when our children and young people test every statement with the questions "How do you know? Can you prove it? What makes it true?" we cannot take for granted this belief in God and sense

of personal relation with Him. We shall certainly not face such questions with a dogmatic statement if we believe that the child must learn through experience. The experience principle suggests two things:

First, we must see that John has from his babyhood on through each stage of growth such natural experiences of seeing God in the world about him, in his own home and in play relationships, in the church, and in his own prayer experiences that he will be as certain of God as of his own mother. Second, we must help John to know the lives of many men and women and the truths they have discovered from their real and profound experiences of God—men like David, Hosea, Jesus, Paul, David Livingstone, William Carey. Thus "encouraged by so great a cloud of witnesses" he will feel the comradeship and courage that result from sharing common spiritual experiences.

Adults need the same two steps. Can we not help them to see the relation of a Christian God to the problems of creating Christian home atmosphere, of being a Christian neighbor to the family next door? Are they not hungry for understanding of the kinds of prayers they should pray if they would be in harmony with God's way of working? Do not their own spiritual horizons need to

be broadened to help them discover the relation of God to the problems of race, industrial and international relations of today? An adult class may thus have dynamic experiences of God. Second, as they share the experiences of God which great men and women have had, they will find new inspiration and courage for their own lives.

But beyond this sense of personal relation to God is another great need. I should like to add another phrase to this question. "Do the pupils have a Christian conception of God?" John cannot possibly come into the most wholesome and satisfying relation with God unless he has a Christian idea of Him.

In a large number of fifth grade classes in religion the teachers made an effort to discover the children's idea of God. They were startled to find that in the vast majority of cases the children thought of God as did the Hebrew people in the time of Moses. "If I should do wrong, He might make my baby sister get sick and die," said one. "He might make a tree fall down on us," said another. "He writes our bad deeds down in a book and punishes us if we do too many," said a third. Scores of these children from intelligent Christian homes and Sunday Schools had almost nothing of

the idea of God on which Jesus based his whole life and work.

A further investigation disclosed the fact that many of our adults are still holding an Old Testament idea of God. I heard a leading layman in one of our churches relate how a certain person was brought into Christian work because of the serious accident that had befallen her father, undoubtedly brought about by God, so as to have just this effect!

Jesus lived in the presence of a Father so loving that His heart is broken when suffering comes to us, His children, whether or not we bring it on ourselves. Yet scores of people have lost their faith and left the church because when sorrow came into their homes, they were told of an Old Testament God who decrees sickness and death rather than of a Christian God who sorrows with His children as Jesus did with his friends. We shall not agree on all the details of what God is like, but the building of a Christian character is dependent upon a Christian conception of God. Every teacher and parent, therefore, needs to examine carefully the personality and teaching of Jesus to discover, and to help the children to discover God as Jesus knew Him.

2. *Do we give the pupil an understanding and*

appreciation of the life and teaching of Jesus, lead him to accept Christ as Saviour, Friend, Companion and Lord, and lead him into loyalty to Christ and his cause? A little investigation among your children will disclose to you the fact that most of them, even those of high school age, have never felt the real significance of Jesus' life. Time after time I have said to children, "We call ourselves Christians and our church a Christian church. What was there that Jesus did or said or was like that caused us to make him the center of our religion?" Again and again I have had the answer, "He healed the sick."

Does this reply disclose something wrong in the emphasis on Jesus in our teaching? Have we told the little children only the stories of the miracles of Jesus, thinking that these were all that they could appreciate? In our Dayton Weekday Schools of Religion, we tried telling to the little children stories of lives that were made more beautiful because of knowing Jesus—of Mary of Magdala, or Zaccheus, of Matthew and Peter and John. They began to feel the deep significance of a life based on love for others, on friendship with a loving God.

When the child is older, he needs a larger view. John, for instance, thinks of Abraham Lincoln not

in terms of single incidents, but of a vital and courageous personality. He sees a whole life from log cabin to martyrdom in a flash of thought. Does he know the story of the whole span of the life of Jesus as he does that of Lincoln—his dream, his ideals, his work, his seeming failure, the ultimate triumph which only time could prove? Is it not possible for John to see him as a vital, courageous personality, who chose to live his life on the highest level of love and truth, even though it should cost his life? Jesus becomes, then, not just passages to be learned, but a personality to be loved.

Through such a contact with this personality, there will be born in John a desire to create another such great life. Even if life seems not to reward his efforts, he will be saved from the low levels of hate, revenge, physical force on which his fellows live, saved from it by this passion for Christlikeness. He will grow more and more like Jesus. Often during this steady growth (and may the growth not stop as long as there is life) there will be a decision to become more Christlike, to conquer un-christian impulses. Sometimes the decision will be shared with the group of other growing Christians in the church. At one such time he will want to register his life-purpose and to in-

crease his individual efforts toward building the Kingdom by becoming a member of the church.

We have taken for granted that our pupil knows Jesus. We must reëxamine this opinion carefully to be sure that there is not merely knowledge, but a dynamic purpose which transforms his life as Jesus becomes his Saviour from all that is un-Christlike.

3. *Does our teaching program lead to a progressive and continuous development of Christlike character?* We often think of Christian character as a static, fixed thing. A man is honest or dishonest; he loves his neighbor or he does not; he is Christian or un-christian. Yet as we examine this man closely we discover that Christian character is a changing, growing thing, different for each individual in each situation.

In John's home with his parents and one sister he is learning to live as a Christian. Add one more member to the circle—a visiting aunt or uncle—and his problem in becoming a Christian is changed. It may become more difficult or it may have a brighter, richer meaning because of this addition. Or John's father has a position in a shop where his relationship with the other men is Christian. Now that he has been promoted to the position of foreman, being Christian becomes a different and more difficult task. Again John's father

is a member of a church board. He has Christian attitudes toward the missionary work of his church, but not toward the foreign children in his own district who would like to attend this church. So "being a Christian" is not the simple result of a desire to become Christlike. It requires the most thorough study and keen thinking.

If we are to lead our pupils into a progressive development of Christlike character, we must help them to discover what it means to be Christian in each situation, to discover that it involves more than they have realized. We must give attention to this not only in the course of study of the class, but in its social and recreational life, its service activities, its worship, its way of behaving in the church school, its whole experience there. We think of the curriculum today as covering all these experiences because they are all full of opportunity for the development of Christian character.

4. *Does our program lead to enthusiastic and intelligent participation in the building of a Christian community and world?* A good many of our church members are still living in the narrow circle of "Me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more." They have not discovered the breath-taking adventure of including a concern for every living person. Jesus himself told

us that religion includes loving our neighbor, and that our neighbor is anyone who needs us.

In this day we are discovering that Christianity includes for us the people of Japan, of Mexico, of the Philippines; it involves not only the program of sending missionaries to them, but the whole problem of our industrial relationships—of paying fairly for services and products, of refusing to exploit natives, of helping the people to develop their own highest possibilities. It has to do with making labor conditions safe and just, with protecting children from sensuous movies and stories of crime, with voting for righteous civic leaders, with providing criminals with a prison atmosphere that fits them for good life in society rather than utterly unfitting them for life.

When we realize that in many cases the church has stood in the way of progress in all these influences toward the Christianizing of our social order, we must admit that we shall never build the Kingdom until our educational program includes all these important problems of religious life. The children must be led to know of these problems through home conversation, school work, group enterprises. We must develop a passion for facts, a refusal to consider our own prejudices, an insistence

on the opportunities to develop the best for every personality.

There is something gripping about such a study of life. When we have come to see the significance of this emphasis in the curriculum our most passive pupils will be converted into eager students and workers.

5. *Does our program develop the ability and desire to participate in the life and work of the church?* Our church leaders have been much concerned about the children who do not seem to grow from the church school into the adult church service. Those of us who know and love both the child and the church realize that the building of church loyalty should form a part of our educational program. It would be well, however, for church boards to face at once the real problem involved.

What has been the attitude of the church toward the children? Has it really seen its opportunity with the children? Has it not insisted that the church school is a separate institution which must be self-supporting? Does it not pay high salaries to its preachers and not one cent toward the training of the teacher who means to the children all that the preacher means to the adults? Are not the rooms where the children are taught often dirty or poorly ventilated basement rooms,

all the attractive rooms having been taken by the adults? With rooms so unlike those in their public schools, with no proper equipment or leadership for learning, is it any wonder that we find it difficult to develop the respect of the children for the church? The church, if it expects their loyalty, will indeed have to support whole-heartedly the educational program and to realize that the church school is not separate, but is the *church itself* attempting to adapt itself to the needs of the children.

And what should be the attitude of the children toward the church? The leaders of children will want to develop the following experiences:

1. A vision of what the church should mean to its people and what the people should attempt to accomplish through the church. The Juniors can begin to think on this problem; the young people and adults should attack it vigorously. They need to discover the total task of the church and to see it not as a burdensome duty but as a thrilling adventure.

2. A pride in the church, not for its particular denominational title or achievements, but for its integral part in a world program of Christianity. I recently visited a Methodist church where a layman said to me, "Our pastor has been giving us a

series of talks on the history of Methodism which have made us so proud that we are Methodists." How short-sighted! We no longer believe that any one church has the only saving doctrines or the only great heroes or the finest denominational program for today. We are interested in the progress of the whole Christian world. Rather than build pride in a denomination or a local church, we must help people to see the glorious task of the Church Universal.

3. We must build not only a pride in the achievements of the church at large, but a realization of its mistakes and weaknesses. They may see the error in the experiments of a state-controlled church, of men who fought Holy Wars to settle religious disputes, of people whose superstitions and pride brought cruelty and death to those in their power. The church of today is likely to make other errors. We shall challenge rather than destroy the loyalty of the young people and adults for the church when we thoughtfully evaluate the wrong emphases of the past and the weaknesses of the present. When we put this beside the great world task of the church, they will find in it a challenge to give their best to the building of a church that will more nearly embody the Master's prayer "Thy Kingdom come."

I once heard a minister speaking to young people about becoming members of the church. The gist of what he said was, "The church has the great thrilling task of making a Christian world, of developing spiritual experiences for each person. Yet with all the glorious progress that is being made, there are many un-christian conditions, many puzzled and heartbroken people who cannot find God. The church may need to develop a totally new kind of program to meet these needs. The best people to help the church to find a new direction are the young people. You have an opportunity for adventuring with us."

4. But we dare not challenge our young people thus, add their names to the church rolls and then forget about them. Are we actually giving them opportunity to take responsibility in the church, to share in the important decisions, to make suggestions concerning its program and policies? Are we making them members of our governing bodies and welcoming their uncompromising idealism? If we are not, how can we expect them to be more than passive?

There should be opportunities through the year for the whole church from the kindergarten to the oldest adults to work together for common ends, if we would built up loyalty. If the church is sup-

porting a missionary in Mexico or a colored theological student in the South, we should not only build up the experience until it is real to everyone, but at some special service where all ages gather to present gifts and to hear letters from the recipient, there should be opportunity for them to feel their unity as a working group of Christians.

5. We need to give training in the meaning of the sacraments and forms of worship of the church and to see that the experiences of the children and young people as they attend and take part are enjoyable because of this meaning. This involves a careful program of training for all the Juniors and Intermediates for at least a brief period of each year.

Now that we have agreed that we must build for intelligent convictions and inner controls of conduct, we face a large task in making the church a meaningful experience in the pupil's life.

6. *Are we giving a Christian interpretation of life and the universe?* We have been wondering why so many college students are losing their faith in religion. We have not recognized that much of the trouble lies in our own inadequate conceptions of life which we have passed on to them as children. Much of the difficulty might be traced to the answers we have given in the church school to such

questions of the children as: Why doesn't God talk to people today as He did in the Bible times? Did God cause this flood or fire to punish the people? Why are there more bootleggers and murderers now than Christians? What makes us sure of life after death?

Teachers who have not made a special study of these problems and who reply on the basis of popular opinion are likely to build up a conception that will have to be unlearned when the children are older. Small wonder that the young people lose their faith in all they were taught about religion when they become old enough to discover the scientific truth about the universe and see the conflicts with the truth as they were taught it.

We must learn how to help them as little children to see that science is man's way of discovering how God works in the world and how we may work with Him. We shall still find it possible to give appreciation to the spiritual experiences of the Hebrews and to realize that primitive people could not possibly have told us *how* the world was made. The beauty of their story is that they saw God in everything. We shall develop a sense of wonder at the greatness, the unfathomableness of such a God as could lead a people on through one stage of progress after another, rejoicing at their

discoveries of the resources of His universe, at their increasing ability to use its laws to prolong life and make it more beautiful. A realization of our own ability to be co-workers with God in this progress always gives the pupil a sense of wonder at the eternal "beyondness" of God and a sense of reality in Him which no one can dispel by argument or scorn.

It is obvious that the teachers cannot do all this for their pupils unless they have prepared for it. In this day of many opportunities through community training school classes and simple, readable books on these subjects, there is no excuse for lack of special preparation except that it has never been required. In a study of teacher-training recently made by the writer, hundreds of preachers responded that the teachers seemed utterly indifferent to the need for training. When we come to realize that we cannot expect our pupils to develop real religious experiences in this scientific age unless we, their leaders, are intelligent, we shall accept the responsibility of special study as a part of the work of teaching a class in the church school.

In our Dayton Week-day Schools of Religion we discovered another problem that has to do with a Christian philosophy of life. We were startled at one time to discover a rather pessimistic attitude

toward Christianity among our children, particularly among those who attended the church service. We investigated and found that the preachers, in an effort to challenge the indifferent adults, were reminding them of the startling number of bootleggers and murderers. Their statements were corroborated by the newspapers. The Sunday School was busy teaching the Bible, choosing from it only the desirable experiences of its characters. Small wonder that the children concluded that the Christians of today were a discouraging minority and the Kingdom only a dream. No one was enriching their lives with stories of the thousands of truly great men and women throughout the world who are attempting great things for the Kingdom. Our curriculum should be shot through with their glorious achievements, so that John and Helen may feel the thrill of belonging to such a great cause. It will affect their philosophy of life, their desires and ambitions.

A child forms his philosophy of life very early. It is formed from the conclusions he makes about life from the total of all his experiences with it. Many a child comes to us with a philosophy that puts material possessions before spiritual ones; that thinks it necessary to strike back, to take re-

venge; that feels it a virtue to get safely away with mischief and wrongdoing. It is the task of the Sunday School teacher who hopes to build Christian character to discover each individual pupil's philosophy of life and to keep it in mind in every contact she has with him in an effort to make it thoroughly Christian.

7. *Does our program give a knowledge, understanding and love of the Bible and an intelligent appreciation of other records of Christian experience?* In the experiences of the Hebrew people, who thought of God as being intimately concerned with every detail of their everyday lives, there is much of spiritual help and inspiration for our problems today. There will come a time, however, when not only John and Helen but their parents will get a great thrill of appreciation from the story or history of the Bible as a whole and from the many adventures and sacrifices which its writing, translation and preservation entailed. When they see the story as a whole, it develops fresh appreciations. The pupil can recognize some conceptions to be pre-Christian and pre-scientific without detracting from his appreciation of the spiritual values that developed in the experience. One boy at the close of a survey study of the Bible as a whole said, "I think it is wonderful to realize that

the nation who gave us the best understanding of God is one which suffered so much and had so few opportunities."

Stories of the vital new meanings which the Bible has brought into the lives of one nation after another, one individual after another will also develop appreciations. The skillful teacher must know how to go beyond mere knowledge into appreciation.

Christian experience did not stop with the close of the Bible record. As we have said, the children need to have a vivid picture of the achievements, the errors, the ideals of the Christian church and of the lives of many of the great Christian leaders from the first century to the present day. Out of this, too, will come a pride in the Kingdom, a challenge to avoid further errors, a keenness to become one with the onward movement of the cause of Christ. Again, this does not come from a mere teaching of facts. It must come as vital human experience.

If the study of these objectives has given to you a broader insight into what is involved in the building of religious experience for the individual, you will want to examine your course of study and your class experience to discover just

what you will need in each year or each quarter to provide for the realization of each one of these aims in the life of each of your pupils.

BOOKS YOU WILL ENJOY

Fox, H. W.—*The Child's Approach to Religion.* A charming series of talks to parents by an English minister in which he tells how we may lead the children to develop the most helpful conceptions of religion for the present day. Every teacher and parent should read this. Richard R. Smith, Inc., publisher, 12 East 41st Street, New York City. Available in October, 1930.

Kennedy, G. Studdert—*The Hardest Part.* Written by an English chaplain during the World War. He tries to show us how he was forced to discard many of his Old Testament ideas of God and discover God through Jesus, in order to meet the needs of these suffering men. Richard R. Smith, Inc., publisher.

Carrier, Blanche—*The Kingdom of Love.* A course on the life of Jesus for Intermediates in which a definite attempt is made to catch the significance of his personality and to find a Christian conception of God. Readable for adults also. Richard R. Smith, Inc., publisher.

Anonymous—By An Unknown Disciple. A story of the life of Jesus for adults which brings out the spiritual significance of his life. Richard R. Smith, Inc., publisher.

The set of books published by the Missionary Education Movement, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, and listed below will help in developing Christian world attitudes.

Moore, Jessie Eleanor—*The Missionary Education of Beginners.*

STOOKER, WILHELMINA—*The Missionary Education of Primary Children.*

HUTTON, JEAN GERTRUDE—*The Missionary Education of Juniors.*

KERSHNER, MABEL G.—*The Missionary Education of Intermediates.*

CHAPTER V

What Does Experience-Centered Teaching Mean?

"WHAT is the trouble with my Sunday School class?" asked a teacher of boys. "I don't know whether the course is wrong or the teacher or the boys, but when I try to make them take part in the lesson they are silent and when I let them talk, they will talk of nothing but football. How can anyone teach them religion?"

"But they are having real experiences in football," I replied. "The material you are trying to teach is not real experience for them."

"Does that mean that I should talk only about football?"

"Not at all. You may lead them into an experience that they know nothing about at present, but it must be a real experience."

"But how shall I go about it? How is the experience method of teaching different from the old method?" he persisted.

It is to answer this same question for many other

Sunday School teachers that this chapter is being written.

WHAT AN EXPERIENCE INCLUDES

Three conclusions to which we have already come will show us three outstanding methods that will be used. We have concluded that this new approach to education is trying to

1. prepare the child for a changing social order by teaching him to think for himself, to choose values and make decisions intelligently, to meet new situations and problems wisely. This purpose will make discussion one of the most important elements of the teaching program.

2. develop inner controls of conduct, the child's own choice of the Christian way through his own understanding of and desire for the best. This will make worship, especially spontaneous worship, a second important emphasis in teaching.

3. see that everything that is to be learned becomes a real experience. We ask ourselves, "What can we *do* that will make this course of study or this situation which the class is facing a vital religious experience for these particular pupils?" So we begin some activity that will lead to certain results.

The important elements of an experience, then,

are activity, discussion, worship. We shall consider each of these.

1. *Activity.* We have agreed that we learn through experience. But where does experience take place? A part of it is going on constantly in our minds, and a large part of it goes on through what we are doing. The younger the child, the more he learns by doing rather than by listening or reading or reflecting upon what has happened before. Words mean little to him, but the thing that happens, the way he acts and feels, the way in which others act toward him—all this teaches him far more than what we say. Only gradually do we become able to learn by the more physically passive methods, and even as adults, we learn effectively from what we do and observe.

So the new approach to the teaching of religion puts much emphasis on learning through doing. It cannot be divorced from thinking, from discussion, from acting with the purpose of finding out something. It is only as methods are carried on together that they have value for the development of religious experience.

There are three different types of activities that may be carried on. They will be named briefly here and discussed at greater length in Chapter VI.

1. The group may undertake an activity as a

means of discovering something they want to know or of developing skill in something they want to do. They may take a trip to a factory to discover the problems of the workers or to appreciate our interdependence in the necessities of life. They may visit a mission church or an institution to find how they can bring help and cheer. They may build a large map of Palestine or a model of Jerusalem so as to visualize more clearly the doings of Jesus. There are many other types of activity, but the point we must keep clearly in mind is that the activity in itself is not valuable unless, as it goes on, we are helping the pupils to broaden their knowledge, deepen their appreciations, develop intelligent means of service.

2. Sometimes the group will want to record the things they have discovered, the conclusions to which they have come, as a means of summing up for themselves and perhaps of sharing with some one else. Some of our best public schools are now encouraging the children to make Year Books or Record Books in which to record their observations on trips or their conclusions from a group experience.

3. The type of activity which we probably neglect most and yet is most certainly going to affect the philosophy of life of each pupil is that

of helping them consciously to choose, evaluate, and practice the finest Christian relationships and attitudes in their life together in the church school.

While we are busy teaching the lesson, we often do not realize that what we are saying or not saying, doing or not doing about the conduct of the pupils is teaching them far more effectively than anything we are saying about the lesson. I have seen pupils learning irreverence, lack of consideration of others, discourtesy, lack of respect for the church, inability to tolerate the plans or religious ideas of others far more often than I have seen them learning the more positive things. I am not surprised, then, when I see the church reaping the results in indifferent young people and adults, who come irregularly and are habitually tardy, who chatter incessantly during worship and lesson as they would not think of doing in their own homes or at a lecture, who cannot work together on board or committee unless everything is done as they think it should be. The first place in which to teach Christian ways of living is the church itself, and we shall have to feel responsible for all the irreligion which our pupils learn through experience while we are trying to teach religion with the lips.

Many teachers are now learning how to make this type of activity of first importance to the pu-

pils. They take time for group discussion or individual conference whenever anything goes wrong. A few rare leaders who know mental hygiene help the pupils to uncover their own real motives—of jealousy, of a feeling of superiority, of fear—so that they may consciously choose a finer type of conduct. The book by Mrs. Sweet, mentioned at the close of this chapter, will give you a picture of how this is done.

2. *Discussion.* In every experience discussion plays an important part. It helps the group to see what the problem is; it guides them through a consideration of all the facts and all the ideals that are involved until they can come to a consistent Christian decision. Chapter VII deals with this subject in greater detail, but we might get one or two general principles clearly in mind here.

When we speak of discussion, we do not mean the question and answer series by which the teacher brings the pupils around to his way of thinking. Nor do we mean an aimless exchange of opinions by the pupils. We are interested, in a discussion, in having the pupils face squarely the whole problem, not as it looks to them at first, but as it is when seen from every angle. We want to encourage them, then, in searching for all the facts and all the values that bear on the problem and to

guide them in thinking clearly through it until they have reached a conclusion that is Christian and satisfying to the whole group. Discussion will take place several times during a single experience.

When we speak of problems, we often find teachers who think that we mean only the obvious problems of conduct and character of which the pupil is conscious. Our pupils are constantly facing such problems as: Shall I be loyal to my friend when it means being unkind to some one else? Shall I attend church when I don't enjoy it? Shall I be honest in paying my taxes when my friends and neighbors all get out as easily as possible? What attitude shall I take toward the colored children in my school? Undoubtedly this type of problem is important. Many of us have overlooked it entirely in our attention to a printed course of study, and our pupils have been learning un-christian solutions to the problems in which they make decisions on the six days of the week while they were studying a course on the seventh. Every teacher needs to study his own class to find which of the problems they face could be thought through in the group on Sunday.

But this is only one type of problem. There are many problems in our world of which we are not conscious but which we need to face in order to

broaden our appreciation of what Christianity involves. Do our pupils feel a vital concern in the problems of child labor and sweatshops, of international and interracial relations? A class of Juniors who were not at all conscious of these problems became deeply interested in a newspaper photograph of a Chinese mother with her attractive baby who was born when his mother was visiting her parents in China but who cannot return to his father in America because of the immigration laws. A high school class began a real experience in religious education when they started a discussion over a recent cartoon on the London peace conference entitled "Have we called the junk man too soon?"

Still another type of problem is that of which the pupil is not conscious but which the teacher can see is the next step needed in the natural growth and development of Christian experience. Perhaps the pupil needs a Christian conception of God in place of his Old Testament ideas, or a spiritual conception to replace his picture of a physical Being. Perhaps he needs an historical point of view of the Bible. Or he is perfectly satisfied with his own prejudices toward other faiths and races and needs to go a step beyond them. For all these he needs the careful thinking of a discussion so that

he can arrive at these broader conceptions with a feeling of conviction.

Sometimes in order to solve these problems the pupil needs to live through the experiences of other people to discover the results of their conduct, the motives which inspired them, the sources of their courage or humility. The pupil will discover some important principles of life by thinking through the decisions which Jesus made in the wilderness and then observed in his life. He will develop a sense of comradeship with God as he lives through the prayer experiences of David or Paul or Jesus.

All these types of problems will result in the various types of discussions which our groups from kindergarten to adult need in the church school.

3. *Worship.* If the experience is to be religious, there needs to be a consciousness of the relation of God to it. When John faces a real problem and searches for a solution or for a Christian point of view, he must feel himself in harmony with the purpose of a Christian God. His own desire for the finest kind of life for himself and all others will grow out of his contact with God, his feeling of working with God in building the Kingdom on earth. Nothing in our modern methods will take the place of the dynamic which comes into one's life through an actual worship experience.

You and I have all had a few outstanding worship experiences in our own lives. We have frequent experiences of worship, sometimes in church, sometimes not. We have learned, too, that our spiritual life does not grow regularly without regular attempts to feel God's presence even in the days when we are too busy, too gay, too serene to feel the mood to pray. So we consciously develop our worship lives by wholesome, regular contact with God as we do our bodies by the choice of wholesome, regular meals. Only as we have this development can worship be a satisfying reality in the crisis. Our boys and girls need to learn these same things, and we can help by sharing our experiences with them.

In this modern, scientific day there is no greater essential to a sane Christian life for our boys and girls and young people than intelligent worship. John goes to college and becomes involved in philosophy, psychology, science. He joins in the discussion of such questions as "How can there be any God beyond ourselves? Why should we believe anything which cannot be proved?" If John has had some real worship experiences—undoubted experiences of answers to prayer, of seeing himself as a part of a great universe which can become the Kingdom of Love, of receiving needed

strength, courage, wisdom to do a thing for which he himself felt inadequate, then he speaks out of this reality of experience. The existence of God has been proved to him by the valid test of experience, not only of himself but of generations of other men.

We have said that this experience must be intelligent, must be based on intelligent conceptions of God, prayer, the Bible, God's purpose in the universe. Unless we have built up such an intelligent conception from the earliest days of childhood, we cannot expect him in the busy days of multiple demands on his time to begin as an adult to reconstruct and relearn all his early ideas on which he has built his philosophy of life. I talked recently with a university professor whose relation to and interest in the church was only nominal. "Tell me," I said, "why you have an open mind and a growing experience in your profession and in all culture, but have no eagerness to grow in religion." The answer was significant. "When I went to college, I found so many lines of thought and phases of life in which I simply had to be intelligent, that I couldn't keep up with them all. If I had started on religion, I should have had to read widely and make very thorough changes in my thinking. So I laid it aside and said, 'I have

that settled for life; I will give my attention to these other phases.'" But there is no sense of reality in his religion now. So our John and Helen must be intelligent in their worship if we covet for them a reality in religion.

But we think of our worship experiences as taking place in connection with some experience of our lives. The question remains whether we can in the church school provide experiences of worship which are real to the pupils, in which something really happens inside, in which God's presence is really felt. It is a question engaging the interest of many of our finest leaders in religious education today. My own present conclusion is that many if not most of the worship services we have planned and carried out do not become worship to the pupils, but that there are certain principles which will help us as we begin to experiment and work to create real experiences for the pupil. It is quite likely that the most significant experiences will be those informal, spontaneous expressions of prayer that rise out of the midst of a discussion or from the determination to carry out some conclusion to which the class has come. Teachers of all departments can learn from the kindergarten teacher how to make this consciousness of God a constant part of the work of the class.

Chapter VIII is given to a further discussion of worship methods.

A COMMON ERROR

Now that we have seen the experience approach as a whole and in some of its parts, we need to be warned of a common error among teachers who attempt to use it. It is so easy to think that we are using the experience method when we are only using the old method and attaching the new terms. A teacher told me this incident:

"I have a friend who used the experience method last Sunday. The lesson she was to teach was the Sower and the Seed. In the opening service of the whole school, announcement had been made that each class was to help in a certain project of giving to some worthy cause. When this class of high school students came together, the teacher found the most prosperous girl in the class decidedly angry. She was tired of always being asked to give. She thought the church had no right to keep asking people for money. The other girls seemed to share her opinion and there was a general feeling of resentment. The teacher took this incident as an opening for her presentation. With a few skillful questions she showed them the relation between their attitude in this matter and the

lesson of the Sower. She felt that her lesson meant much more to the girls because it connected with this real problem."

"Was she really using the experience method?" I asked, and then, seeing that my friend was puzzled, I answered my own question. "She used a point of contact, which is the true Herbartian method of tying the known to the unknown. She used the child's problem merely as an introduction to her own material. It is likely that this lesson merely made them ashamed of their own attitude without their seeing any very good reason why they should give, except as a Christian duty. What might she have done that would have meant living through a whole experience which would actually change the attitude of the girls toward giving? If she really wanted intelligent purpose at the heart of giving, what might she have done?"

The two of us thought the matter over together and made the following lists of the ways in which this teacher might have proceeded in order to secure an intelligent purpose:

1. A discussion as to the reasons why we should give, with a decision to investigate certain reasons that we find in the Bible as well as in other sources in literature such as the *Vision of Sir*

Launfal. These reasons must have resulted from the experiences of other people.

2. An investigation as to the total budget of the church, the amount which it gives to various projects compared with the amount used for maintenance.

3. The investigation of the personal budgets or of the conclusions or convictions of some people who practice tithing, to discover whether they do have enough for themselves when they give one tenth to the work of the Kingdom. Perhaps personal budgets made on the allowances of the girls might follow.

4. An investigation of the particular object to which the money was to be given at this time. If possible this should include a trip to the institution or group.

5. A study of what constitutes personal worth. The teacher might have each girl list all the things which she has received to make her life what it is and another list of the things she has given to the world in return. She should help the girls to realize that a person's real worth is counted more by what he gives than by what he receives. She can help them to see that the more we receive, the greater our obligation to give; that the people

who have given most largely of what they have are always those who are happiest.

6. Choice of some one project of giving which is a part of the church budget, but in which the girls can take a personal interest and to which they can make particular gifts.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

All of this consideration of the experience approach makes clear several other facts we should recognize:

1. A real experience can rarely take place in one period of thirty minutes. Teaching by the experience method does away with separate, isolated "lessons"—this Sunday's lesson, next Sunday's lesson. One ongoing experience will move through three, four, five weeks according to what needs to be done. The discussion to think through to a new point of view, the activity to help in the discovery of facts and values, the worship to arouse desires and formulate convictions—it is a balance of all these that goes to make up an experience.

"But," you ask, "what shall we do with the regular Sunday School lessons? Our course provides a different one for each Sunday."

A teacher needs to begin her work for each

quarter by listing the main purposes of each lesson, grouping the lessons into about three groups, around each of which a real experience can be built. By considering then just what kind of an experience her particular class needs, some of the suggested material will drop away and the outline of an experience valuable for her pupils will begin to take shape. Then she will plan this experience so that it moves naturally through a series of weeks with the work of each Sunday beginning where the work of the last Sunday was broken.

When the teacher becomes creative in this fashion and is no longer tied to the use of each particular lesson as written, the class takes on a new life. Sometimes an experience of the group like the one described above will seem so important that the course of study will be laid aside for a few weeks while this problem is worked out. At other times the work of a quarter will proceed along the general lines planned by the lesson writer.

2. We shall notice that this method is exactly the opposite in procedure to the Herbartian method. The older method began with ten verses of the Bible, sought to find their meaning (often difficult because it was taken out of the setting) and then searched for applications of the truth to our lives. The newer one begins with problems of

our present life, searches through the experiences of others for their conclusions, for the source of their inspirations, and comes to certain conclusions concerning the development of our own religious experience, or of the Kingdom of God in our own day. Each experience is approached from a real purpose in the mind of the pupil and this gives vitality to learning.

Many teachers are critical of the new method because they are afraid that it does not secure a way of "teaching the Bible." As a matter of fact, they will find that under the new approach they are using the Bible just as much as in the old method, but in a way which gives it far more meaning and value. Because of going to the Bible in search of spiritual experiences, they will be using these records of the past exactly as Jesus did—for the purpose of developing ourselves and our world in harmony with God's ideals.

3. We shall want to keep in mind that this method of teaching is not for children alone but for all ages. The adults of our church schools are as hungry for and as much in need of vital experiences that give guidance in intelligent Christian living as are the children. Every method discussed in this chapter may function as a part of an adult experience. Indeed, when we begin to have adults

seriously concerned about the problems of Christian life and the Kingdom today, to gather in small groups for the discussions which will help them to work out their own conclusions instead of sitting like sponges under the oratory of some capable speaker, we will begin to see some spiritual progress in the life of the church.

Many preachers are complaining that the Sunday School is in competition with the church. A large share of the cause lies in the fact that the adults, having had one experience of passive listening to a teacher and of participation in an adult worship service, see no reason for remaining for a very similar experience. The organized class has added further enjoyment to the Sunday School hour by its emphasis on social fellowship and often on a childish spirit of competition. The experience for the class members has been social rather than religious.

Some leaders who feel the need of vital, growing experiences in religion for adults have discussed a different plan. They would set up a series of discussion groups centered around problems of Christian living, home-making, world and community citizenship, prayer, conceptions of God and the Bible that are for adults the real problems in their own development. Each individual would

enroll for the group which is discussing the problems of greatest concern to him. The major worship experience of the whole group would be that of the church service. There might still be the organized classes of men and women to provide the social contacts, but it would not be necessary to have each class as a unit under one teacher or all the classes in one worship service.

CONCLUSION

Difficult as is this new approach to the teaching of religion, it is so full of vitality and the concerns that are really significant in life that we must agree that it will be worth our best efforts to acquire skill in it. From its use we may expect to see results in the Christian lives of our pupils.

BOOKS YOU WILL ENJOY

Clowes, Amy—*Seeking the Beautiful in God's World.* A course for third grade children in which experience was the aim of the teacher at each step. Richard R. Smith, Inc., publisher.

Bonser, Edna M.—*Child Life and Religious Growth.* Another primary course providing rich experiences in seeing God in his world and in living together. Abingdon Press.

Jenness, Mary—*Meet Your United States.* A course for Intermediates on home missions so planned that it encourages the creative method on the part of the teacher and the group. The Friendship Press.

Sweet, Helen, Firman and Fahs, Sophia Lyon—Exploring Religion with Eight Year Olds. A diary of the experience of a teacher with one group in which learning to live together as Christians became a real and conscious experience to them. Henry Holt, publisher.

The Inquiry, New York—*Who Makes Up My Mind on International Questions?* and *Who Is My Neighbor?* Two courses for adults planned so that the leader will build about the experiences of the group.

Suter, John W., Jr.—*Creative Teaching.* A book planned to help the teacher understand this new approach. Macmillan Co.

Vieth, Paul H.—*Teaching for Christian Living.* A book for teachers in the church school. Bethany Press.

CHAPTER VI

What Activity and Handwork Is Most Profitable?

A GIRLS' choir of thirty girls from ten to sixteen years of age in the Calvary Episcopal church of Pittsburgh had a most interesting experience recently. Their director, Miss Hilda Shaul, suggested that they give in their own church the old Hebrew worship service connected with the Festival of the Booths. As the girls heard more about the music and costumes, they became enthusiastic about visiting the Feast of the Booths service for children at a nearby Jewish synagogue. The visit was a revelation to them.

"I didn't know the Jews believed in God," said one girl as she read on the wall the inscription "The Lord our God, the Lord is One." At the close of the service an apple was given to each child. "I don't want to eat mine," said another girl, "Jews are—well, you know—so dirty." She was finally persuaded to eat it.

The girls were curious to know the meaning of all they saw and so the scrolls, the Ark, the per-

petual light, the symbols of the Jewish faith on walls and pews were explained. They became eager to go back to their own church to see if there were any symbols in their building which they had never appreciated.

The service for their own church was planned, with a Jewish cantor invited to help. The suggestion was made that since the Hebrews gave of the fruits of their fields, we modern city people should give the Lord products of the city. So the girls began a series of trips to the factories and foundries to secure bits of coal, steel, glass, aluminum, which are made there. Incidentally, they watched the processes of manufacture and began to feel a real sympathy for the men and women who had to work in an atmosphere of intense heat.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE

This is an experience typical of the new emphasis of learning by doing, by living through an experience. Often the purpose is that of discovering something of value or of making a situation or activity in which we are engaged richer in meaning. It is worth while that we note several things about this particular experience as typical of others.

First, we will see that such a natural life expe-

rience has more than one result or value for religious education. In this experience the following were the outcomes:

1. A deeper understanding of the meaning of worship, of expressing moods in a beautiful way, of giving gifts to God to express that mood.

2. A new appreciation of the beautiful and worshipful in a church building.

3. A new feeling of respect for the Jewish people.

4. An understanding of the interdependence of all the people as each group labors to produce what others need.

5. A new realization of the conditions and problems of the laborers and a desire that they might be able to work under comfortable conditions.

Every such total experience should have several outcomes, but this is possible only as the teacher chooses the experience richest in possibilities and keeps himself alert to all the possibilities.

Second, every such experience should lead on naturally to others. This project might have led to a further study of industrial conditions and the movement among some employers to make better conditions. Or it might have encouraged the choir

to collect songs, poems, prayers concerning laboring people and to create a worship service in recognition of labor. Or it might have developed into a study of racial prejudices and reasons for overcoming them.

Third, such an experience will use over and over the various methods we have named. Discussion will become necessary at several stages. Worship should be a natural element two or three times, as the girls expressed to God their appreciations and concerns, their desire to help in creating a better world. We note again that such an experience does not take place in a single period but spreads over several weeks.

ADAPTED TO ALL AGES

It might be well for us to note that such experiences are valuable to all age-groups. We will suggest some of these:

Kindergarten. A group was living through the experience of the coming of new life in spring. Their activities were confined to one hour on Sunday morning. They planted bulbs and seeds and watched them grow, they discussed the wonder of springtime by studying Miss Tarrant's exquisite picture of "All things bright and beautiful," they heard stories, sang songs, dramatized the coming

of birds, worshiped often, made posters of springtime, until they were full of joy and gratitude to God. They brought it to a climax by going in automobiles one Sunday to an Old Ladies' Home, taking their posters and plants and singing their songs as a gift for their friends.

Primary. A plan is presented in one course [1] in which a Primary group became much interested in houses. All sorts of activities and values grow out of this interest. They construct a playhouse and learn to appreciate the various types of labor that must go into the making of our homes. They learn to work together happily by taking turns and dividing the responsibility. They study the homes of insects and birds and marvel at the Creator's plan of teaching them how to build. They have stories of home life from the Bible and from other stories for children to develop their ideals of Christian life in the home. All of this makes its contribution to the Christian development of the child, if the leader helps him to see God and men working together in the best way. Such a rich experience will probably work out differently in each group in which it is carried out because it has such a wealth of possibilities.

[1] Bonser, *Child Life and Religious Growth* (Abingdon Press).

Another group [2] took their chairs out on the church lawn and went from a discussion of the beautiful things they saw into a discovery of how God and men work together in a continuous creation. They expressed their joy by writing as a group a beautiful poem of creation. The thought of God's beauty being all through the world became the central thought for the work of a whole week.

Junior. The work and writings of Edna Acheson [3] are full of vital experiences of Junior children. There was the broken lamp which led from their agreement to earn the money for replacing it to experiences with labor problems in New York, and to a new appreciation of the work of their church. There was the Christmas party for which they had full responsibility and through which they learned about church budgets and showing unselfishness toward little children and caring for guests courteously.

Other groups may have more formal classroom experiences and still discover a variety of activities and values. They may develop much more understanding of the work of Jesus by constructing a

[2] Clowes, *Seeing the Beautiful in God's World* (Richard R. Smith, Inc., publisher).

[3] Acheson, *The Construction of Junior Church School Curricula* (Teachers' College Publications).

large map, adding to it as the course brings up new information. Or they may make a collection of pictures showing the most significant events of his life and work, and share it later with a mission group. They would probably write a brief description to accompany each picture.

Intermediate and Senior. One group might become tremendously interested in some industrial problem such as the choir described in our first paragraph and through investigation and discussion might come to some conclusions that make them more intelligent citizens. At least they may learn to be more intelligent Christian consumers, buying the products of the firms that have the most Christian relationships with their employees.

Another group might become interested in having some personal contact with each of the home mission stations of the denomination. As they gather information about each, they might construct a large map of the United States on which might be placed pictures of the work going on in each section. From the Home Mission Board they could secure the name of one teacher in each place and begin correspondence which would help them to see the genuine needs of each situation. This might lead on beyond the development of respon-

sibility toward the church budget into many other valuable outcomes.

Young People and Adults. In these departments one will find just as much need for vital religious activities. A group may become deeply interested in the influence of the movies on the community and not only study the local situation but take some definite action toward improving it.

Or a class of young people may be given the responsibility of directing the departmental worship services for a month. They would have not only the task of collecting materials that would be meaningful to their group, but the responsibility of discovering some really significant experience around which to center the worship and of learning what worship is.

A group of adults might wish during the Lenten season to become more familiar with the whole situation which brought about the death of Jesus and might search for source materials, make reports, and through discussion come to the understanding they had desired.

Another valuable activity is the creating of plays by the group and the preparation for presenting them. They may create plays from biographies or situations in world affairs, missionary activity, the

Bible, and through these plays discover many values of life.

VARIETY OF PURPOSES

Some experiences are planned primarily for the purpose of helping the group to discover something of value or to add meaning to a situation or activity already going on. Others have the primary purpose of helping the group live together in a Christian way—an experience needed from the kindergarten to the adult class. Many of the incidents in Mrs. Sweet's book, mentioned in the previous chapter, are splendid examples of this. There was the day when the trip to the park had to be postponed because of the conference that was necessary to clear up the conduct difficulties on the way out of the building. There was the discovery, over and over, of the motive of jealousy and eagerness for approval that lay back of some of the unkind words and acts. These matters became, as they should be, of primary concern to the group. In every experience of any type, this matter of learning to live and work together as Christians should be of recognized importance. The experiences suggested above could all combine these two purposes of discovering meaning and living together.

A third purpose which has not been so fully illustrated is that of recording the conclusions which have been reached. The Primary children make booklets showing by picture and poem the various ways in which God cares for us and sends them to a Children's Hospital. The kindergarten children have decided to work with God in the winter by feeding birds, so they not only put bread on the church windowsill but make a poster of children feeding birds, and put it on their wall for the winter months. The Juniors and Intermediates make a book of missionary heroes or of stories Jesus told, with their meanings briefly described, or of records of their trips to a mission school, or a factory, with drawings of what they saw.

Often this purpose of recording conclusions is combined with that of sharing with or helping others. Worship services to be presented in hospital or Home, booklets to be sent, gifts to be made all express the Christian concern for the happiness of others.

Some schools or classes will find it impossible to undertake such time-consuming activities as have been discussed above. The teacher's employment or the scattered homes or full schedules of the pupils or the fixed time and place of a Week-day School of Religion may prohibit extra sessions.

Even in the traditional one hour a week, however, many real experiences can be carried on, though the brevity of time and the length of time between sessions will make it difficult. The school can have a good library of source materials. It can secure educational moving pictures that develop the pupils' appreciation of customs in various countries, of industrial processes, of the wonder of growing things. The use of such films will become increasingly valuable as an element of learning. Guests may be invited to the school to give the pupils contacts with other nationalities and religions or to provide facts concerning a subject being studied. There are many such possibilities that we have scarcely touched in our present practice.

DANGERS IN ACTIVITIES

A mother said to me recently, "A teacher in our school is having the children construct a village of India. Do you think the work has any religious value? Are they really learning anything religious?"

"I don't know," I had to reply. "I can't tell by knowing what they are doing. They may be really facing the problem of a country hungry for independence and trying to discover what is the

Christian thing for England to do. Or they may be so absorbed in the making that they get nothing but fun and excitement. They may be learning how to work together with Christian attitudes or they may be so interested in the completed village that all sorts of problems arise and are ignored."

To secure real religious value through activity, the teacher must be exceptionally alert. She must check herself to see if she has made possible the following essentials of such an experience.[4]

1. The purpose of the activity must be kept always in mind; the physical activity must never become an end in itself. The whole experience is a failure unless the teacher has aroused the desires of the pupils to discover, to work happily together, to share, to learn something of value. In addition to asking questions and supplying the group with materials from which they may learn, she must be sure to help them at the close to lift out the significant knowledge and principles which are to be of permanent value because they have learned them through experience.

2. The experience must be one which is really valuable to the development of the pupils. There are many interesting things to do which do not

[4] Suggested by the dangers listed in *Teaching Religion*, by A. J. W. Myers, and used by permission.

contribute really important learning. The teacher must discover before she begins whether the suggested activity has possible outcomes of real value and whether there are enough sources of information available so that the pupils may do their own work.

3. The teacher must watch for results not only in the group as a whole but in the thinking and living of each individual. Often I have been thrilled with the discussion conclusions of a class or with a lovely piece of work, only to find that I had seen the conclusions or the work of the few most capable pupils. Some of the other members of the group have no understanding of what we were discussing, still have crude and immature ideas, or have developed attitudes of resentment toward others. These individual results are more important than those of the group, for they represent ways of thinking and living that will go on in the lives of the pupils.

4. The teacher must be sure that she has prepared adequately. Sometimes she feels that if she is to be ready to accept the suggestions and follow the interests of the group, she will not need to prepare so thoroughly. Quite the opposite is true. She must know exactly how to prepare for and carry through experiences that will have value.

There are definite steps or principles to follow even in creative work. We shall consider these next.

THE FIVE STEPS OF A FULL EXPERIENCE

1. *Preparing.* As we have said above, the teacher must prepare by discovering first the situation or problem or section of the course of study around which an experience is to be built. The main purpose must be clearly in mind. Then he will list as many possible types of activity as he thinks are open to this particular group in the time and with the sources available.

The teacher's purpose may be to develop a sense of loyalty and responsibility to the church. It may have risen out of a problem in his group, or out of his observation that the class seems to sense no relationship with the church, or out of the course of study they are following. He will list many activities—a party for the younger children, a study of their own church building, a willingness to help in the church survey, and so on. Finally he may either determine to try the one in which his group would probably be most interested and which offers the greatest possibilities of other outcomes, or he may decide to suggest two or three plans to see which one really interests them most.

2. *Purposing.* Much of the value, as we have said, lies in the undertaking of the activity by the group because of their sense of value in it. Much of our error in this work lies in our supplying the children with a ready-made plan and telling them the purpose of it. A group of children in a vacation school were studying how our modern cities may carry on the work of Jesus. After a listing of the various philanthropic institutions of the city, the children decided to go to visit one to see if they could find some way of helping. They themselves chose the Old Soldiers' Home; they themselves suggested after the visit that one thing which would make the men more comfortable was fans, which they knew they could make. The work that followed had all the values which an experience should have, of learning to work together and to work neatly and of serving others, but it was far superior to the manual work usually planned in vacation schools because it grew out of a Christian purpose of the pupils.

3. *Planning.* The planning, too, should be done by the whole group, pupils and teachers together, if the experience is to have the greatest value. Often they will not be able to see through to the very end, but they can plan one or two steps and meet again for further planning when these are

done. In the enterprise above, the children themselves decided on size and style, sent a committee to buy cardboard and paints, wrote to a neighboring city about having the handles fastened on. A later bit of planning was the party they were to give at the Home when the fans were presented.

A high school group decided to study the four Gospels to discover all of Jesus' doings and sayings that had to do with relations to other nations. The pupils themselves with the teacher as a member of the group decided how to divide the work among several committees, how to record the material so that it could be combined into one list, and later how to bring the findings into a few brief conclusions. It is important that the teacher know how to share the results of experience with the group without deciding matters for them. It is his place to see that they have all the facts before them before they decide.

4. *Executing*. The pupils will go forward into the carrying out of the plan with all the eagerness that accompanies the executing of one's own plan. But they may grow indifferent or careless, they may meet obstacles that puzzle or discourage them, they may develop unpleasant attitudes among themselves. A few capable ones may proceed without regard to the other members. Or the

group may develop the activity without seeing the relation of God or of Christian purposes to it. The place of the teacher in all these situations is to raise questions, conduct discussions, make suggestions which will enable them to find their sense of direction and constantly choose the best ways of working. The teacher must see that the outcomes of character value, of knowledge, of worship, of individual and group attitudes are all achieved.

5. *Judging*. An important part of the value of the experience will be in the conscious evaluation of the enterprise by the pupils. The group that gives a party will question whether they worked together in the best way, really provided a happy time for everyone, and could have used the money to any better advantage. The group that conducts a worship service at a mission church will ask themselves whether the people really worshiped; whether they, as visitors, showed friendship without superiority; whether they could improve on their plans for another time. The teacher again will suggest and question and encourage.

THE OLD AND NEW METHODS

This whole discussion of activity is based on our new theory of education. The Herbartian method holds that the child should learn first and then do

something with his hands which will impress this learning on his mind. It tells us that there is "no impression without expression." So the whole system of handwork has developed as we have it in many Sunday Schools at present—coloring pictures or cutting out and mounting a picture of some object found in the lesson; making scenes in the sand table; constructing models of villages. Often the work has little educational value because it was planned entirely by the teacher and carried out through specific directions to the pupils. Almost as often it has no religious value because the work that is done is so far from the main truth of the lesson and so little related to the lives of the pupils that it becomes mere "busy work," or physical recreation. There is even less excuse for the artificial type of handwork in manual training that has been developed in our vacation schools. It is frankly bait. The fact is that the children are quite as interested in making the things they have planned themselves for some purpose which has appealed to them as they are in this other program which is wholly unrelated both to life and to the learning that is going on in the school.

The new theory of education holds that we should not learn first and then act, but act in order to learn; that as we make a map or create a play

or plan a gift or a worship service, we begin to collect information, discover its value, use it in actual life. We learn while we are doing. What we learn thus we can use in other experiences.

So activity when chosen and used intelligently as a means of helping the pupils learn in religion is one of the centers of the new education.

CHAPTER VII

How Shall We Lead a Discussion?

A GROUP of children at the Week-day School of Religion were discussing their opinions on the enrollment of colored pupils in their public school. "The Board ought to have a special school for them in the city," said Mary, "they have no right to come to our schools."

"We don't want them in our class picture and on our teams and everything," added Violet. "Let's start a petition to the Board and get everybody to sign it."

"Wait a minute," said the teacher of religion, who had overheard. "Do you want to take an important step like that before you have thought it out carefully?"

"But you heard what we think about it," protested Mary.

"That wasn't thinking," replied the teacher. "It was neither honest nor clear thinking. You will need to collect facts on both sides and stay with

them until you have come to an intelligent conclusion."

Our church and church school life is so full of this kind of thinking that the church and the Kingdom are constantly held back by it. A group of preachers visited a class in a Week-day School of Religion in which the children were taught to think clearly, honestly, persistently. As the class faced the question of whether the love which Jesus demonstrated in his life is really a practical and desirable basis for our modern relationships, there was no attempt to come to the pious conclusions often accepted without thinking. Instead, there was an insistence that the pupils consider all the facts possible for children of their age to comprehend. It was not a single problem. It was not determined in one period. But as the pupils left the classroom they were doing some very solid thinking. When they had gone, one preacher said, "If the majority of our people could be taught how to think as these children are, we would make the most amazing progress in our churches in the next generation."

VALUES OF DISCUSSION

We have shown how important the discussion is to our modern work in religious education. It is a

part of every experience in the church school. It takes the place of recitation. It makes a great contribution to the development of the pupil. Just what does discussion do to eliminate the faults in our thinking? Just what values does discussion have for the teaching of religion?

1. Discussion must teach each pupil, young or old, to think

a. *clearly*. He must have all the facts before him, must be able to distinguish between important and trivial factors, must accept only a conclusion that is based on all the important facts. When our young people go to college and hear all sorts of explanations of the universe and motives for conduct, they are helpless unless they have learned to think clearly.

b. *honestly*. In religion particularly we have formed the bad habit of choosing the facts we wish to consider, the interpretations we prefer to believe, and dismissing the rest. It is this clinging to prejudice and tradition instead of facing facts openly, of setting up values that we can defend and allowing them to lead us into new paths, that is making thousands of our intelligent people of today leave the church or keep only a nominal interest. The child who

is to have vital religion today must be willing to face all facts and to come to his conclusions in the light of the situation as honestly observed. He will be willing, for instance, to admit the mistakes that the church has made, to recognize its weaknesses as well as its many achievements, but will still be able to find indisputable values in religion for which he is willing to give his life.

c. *persistently.* Too often we come to conclusions before we have half finished a real consideration of all facts; we indulge in snap judgments and generalizations. A child of today dare not have any ideas which he cannot hold intelligently. We must, therefore, teach him to think clearly, honestly, and persistently.

2. Through discussion, we can help the pupil to have a basis for appreciation of all the religious experience of the race. He may enter, for instance, into the experience which Jesus had in the wilderness and through the medium of discussion try to discover the reasons why Jesus made his decisions as he did, why these principles of life which he adopted were in reality the strongest and finest he could have chosen.

3. Discussion will help the pupil not only to

find the truth about questions which we face today, but to develop appreciations of those values which are worthy of his approval. Many of the real problems that he faces do not have obvious solutions. Shall he agree to the conception of sportsmanship that makes him stand for the wrong-doing of a comrade against the good of society, or shall he put society above friendship? It will require the clearest, keenest thinking to come to conclusions which he can use in building his own character.

4. Discussion should prepare the pupil to take a creative part in the religious life of his community. Our religion cannot go on unchanged from generation to generation any more than can any other phase of our lives. The Christian needs to make progress, to find fresh interpretations, to stand for new movements, to change the program of the church to meet the needs of the people of today. Unfortunately, the church has a bad reputation for resenting change and thus obstructing progress. We must teach our children through discussion to discover the places where change is needed. Then, through the great love for his church and his fellow men which has been aroused in worship we must help him to contribute to their best development.

DISCUSSION METHODS

Discussion with Juniors. It is clear then that the teacher of religion must know how to conduct discussion. His method must be elastic because he must adapt it to the needs of the particular pupils. Some suggestions can be given by outlining an actual discussion with a group of Junior children.

One day before the class began, a fifth grade group at the Week-day School of Religion told the teacher of the new game that had been invented for Halloween. They were already having great fun with it. The boys were standing on the sidewalks and seeing how many milk bottles on front porches they could break by throwing stones at them. During the class session, the teacher raised the problem for discussion.

1. See the Problem. The first task was to see both sides of the problem. What made this a good game? It required skill and it was fun to see the bottles break, to hear housewives come to the door, to run away.

2. See Consequences. The teacher suggested that they discover all of the actual results of such a game. How do the housewives feel when they find the broken glass? How do the milkmen feel? Who actually pays the bill for the broken bottles?

The boys began to discover for themselves the attitudes of suspicion, anger, and irritation which were aroused in the whole community by this game. They looked still further. Did the game make any difference in the boys themselves? When the policeman came around the corner, what happened? When they were asked at school whether anyone knew about the situation, what problems did they have to face?

All the above points which the children would need to keep in mind in order to come to conclusions were put on the blackboard as discovered. In fact, the points in discussion should always be listed because most of us will need to go back over them in order to weigh their values, to bring together the various ideas in the process of coming to conclusions. The teacher must not be sparing with the use of the blackboard. In fact, I do not see how any Sunday School can consider itself adequately equipped for teaching today without a good blackboard for every class.

The teacher now pushed the discussion still further. He suggested that they must discover other results of this game in the community. Does the community, as a whole, live together in such a way that it depends upon each individual to be trusted or that it is suspicious of each individual?

What are the customs in our community life that show us what we expect of others? The children discovered that the stores, the banks, the libraries, the various delivery systems—all sorts of institutions are depending upon the trustworthiness of others. And what does happen when a small number of people make it impossible for us to trust everyone? The class discovered that the system of courts, police, and social agencies must be paid for by those citizens who do live honorably.

3. See the Experiences of Others. Now that we have seen how things actually work in life, we need to search for the values which make us determine to choose one way or another. Shall one choose his own fun, his own interests even if it brings about all of these results or shall he think of the good of all? They examined the experience of Jacob who lived on the basis of getting everything he could for himself and not worrying about others. He had to leave his first home. He chose a second and became rich, but he had to leave that one. He was homesick for his boyhood country, but when he came back to it, he found himself afraid of the brother he had cheated. Not until then did he realize the results of living on the philosophy he had chosen. It took a whole night

of spiritual struggle for him to see life differently and resolve to choose a new basis of relationships.

The teacher told the story of the experience of Zaccheus who also lived on this philosophy. It was easy to get rich from dealing with the ignorant and helpless Hebrews. But one day his satisfaction was shattered, for he met a man who had chosen a different way of living. He gave and gave until he had nothing, yet there was something so radiant, powerful, triumphant about him that Zaccheus started his search for it.

The teacher suggested other Scripture references to be looked up. He inquired as to their meaning for the children and whether their truth in human experience was clear. Perhaps there was time for the children to suggest the experiences of other people about whom they had read who held to one method of living or the other and whose lives showed the results.

4. Conclusions. The class came to the conclusion that the values for which Jesus stood are in reality the same as those which they would choose for themselves. It was time, then, to return to the original problem and work out a possible solution. The teacher raised further questions. Could they plan another game which would involve skill and would be great fun, but which would be in line

with the good of the community rather than with the train of results we have listed? Suggestions were made and the group planned some actual group projects that would give them the fun of working mysteriously but either would have the result of helping some one or at least would cause no damage.

The group then summed up their conclusions on the whole discussion and expressed them in worship, using the song "I Would Be True," and following it with prayers by individual members and by the teacher.

Discussion in the Kindergarten. The same general method will work out with discussion in any age-group. In the Sunday kindergarten, for instance, the period of discussion will be broken up into brief sections and interspersed with activity, but the thinking would be just as keen as the age of the children would allow. Too often we allow a lazy substitute for thinking by accepting the first comment which comes to their minds.

If the problem is the developing of an appreciation for the work of the mother in the home there is a short conversation on what mother does to get the house ready for Sunday (preparing for Sunday meals and clothing and other activities),

what mother did this morning before we came to church. We will stop then and act out many of mother's duties and after this physical relaxation we will face the question "What can we do to help mother in all her work?" The first suggestions will be, undoubtedly, a willingness to attempt to make the beds or to do other tasks beyond their powers. The teacher will need to push the thinking back until they come to concrete acts within their ability.

But what else will help mother besides doing part of the work? The children can be led to discover that they can save a great deal of work by doing things for themselves instead of depending upon mother for them. They can discover, too, that it helps more than anything else if they are happy and obedient instead of cross and selfish. Again the work of the hour will go on through acting out what the children can do, through song and prayer, through handwork and story. The result of all these activities is now an intelligent appreciation of mother and of the child's share of responsibility which the children have discovered for themselves without being told.

Discussion in an Adult Class. The adults may be facing the problem of discovering what the

Christian attitude of our nation should be toward Nicaragua or Mexico or some other country. They will want to list the popular *attitudes* and discover the reasons for them. They will want to determine the actual *facts* both as to what is happening and as to the conditions and character traits of the people. For these facts they may turn to experts in the group or community or to books or magazines that will be reliable. It is well as far as possible for reports to come through members of the group as a result of their study.

The class will want to draw up the *values* which need to be set up in our relationship between nations. This work would involve a study of Jesus and his ideals and of experiments that have been tried in international Christian relationships. The class would then be ready to draw up certain *conclusions* as to attitudes and relationships which are desirable and certain possible *courses of action* which they would recommend.

If practical, the group should actually carry out some action toward that end—perhaps a letter to their Senator, or an act of friendship to some local people of a particular nationality, or a letter to a missionary of the country under consideration to see what the class could send that would be of help.

LEADING THE DISCUSSION

How may you, as the teacher, prepare to lead a discussion? You will first try to see the problem as it will appear to the group. List the various attitudes that will be taken by different sections of the group, and think through each of these attitudes. What can you ask and to what sources can you send them to help them discover the facts, or to find ideals greater than they have held? Discover and prepare to lead discussion on every angle of the problem, not just from your own point of view, but from every one that can be brought forward.

It is exceedingly important that you shall not set out to try to make the group think exactly as you do, but shall help them to examine every possible solution, fact, ideal, and to determine for themselves what is best. So long as the church attempts to come to all conclusions for the pupils we cannot expect any real thinking on their part. As soon as the pupils discover that they are being led through some mental gymnastics in order to arrive at the teacher's conclusion, their real interest is lost.

If the group must come to a common agreement in order to carry out some action, the decision

should rest not on the opinion of the majority but on a new conclusion to which all can agree. There is a democratic and Christian way which gives each member of the group a creative part in the decision. Dr. Harrison Elliott [1] describes it in his book on the discussion method. The leader should find the predominant purpose held by each member or faction of the group and help them to discover a solution that includes the purposes or values of all.

If a group is deciding whether to merge their church with another or to remain as a separate one, the leader can discover that those who want to merge desire it because it would make possible a lesser financial burden, more efficiency and enthusiasm, and a more adequate building. Those who desire to remain feel that a smaller church gives everyone some task, provides a more homelike atmosphere, is more likely to retain spiritual life. Perhaps a plan can be worked out whereby the churches merge to secure certain benefits, but organize into groups for social and spiritual gatherings which make each person feel at home and take a part. To such a plan practically all the members can agree. Or an adult group discusses

[1] Elliott, *The Process of Group Thinking* (Association Press).

disarmament. One section favors arms for protection, another is more concerned about moral leadership into peace. The task is to find a plan that will provide both safety and moral leadership.

Often the discussion is on a subject about which many of the members feel very keenly. It is likely that their emotions will get in the way of clear thinking. Dr. Elliott urges the leader to produce an atmosphere in which fellowship is developed, all sides are heard, but the points made are repeated or summed up by a chairman or leader who states them without emotion and so brings the group into a consideration of their actual values.

We may well note the steps which we would take in the discussion of a problem:

1. See the whole problem, discovering why some people feel, think or believe as they do about each angle of it.

2. Find all possible results of each course of procedure. Search for the values in life which would help you to determine on one choice or another.

3. Work out a possible solution containing the values which each group wanted to conserve.

4. Come to specific conclusions which may be worked out by the group. You must not formulate all the questions so thoroughly that you do not

have the opportunity to bring in many of their questions or interests which you have not considered, but it will help you to have possibilities of questions and lines of interest in mind.

5. Make constant use of the blackboard.

6. Through the whole discussion remember that your aim is not to "get over" a certain truth which you see clearly, or to cover a lot of material, but to be intent upon what is happening within the minds of the pupils, be concerned about giving them skill in thinking and in discovering the highest values of life.

A CHURCH SCHOOL LIBRARY

This consideration of the discussion will make clear the growing need in the church school for a library of source materials, unless the city has an unusually good library which will secure materials for religious education. Some teachers become discouraged when they hear these discussion methods presented. They say, "Oh, I never could lead such a discussion. The leader has to know so much about everything." Our modern education takes it for granted that no one has all the information he needs, but solves the problem by training boys and girls as well as leaders how to find what information they need. Now that our emphasis is on hav-

ing the pupils discover facts for themselves, it is desirable to have a great deal of material which they can read and which is adapted to their interests. Within the last year or two many books of this kind have been published. The church school should make a careful study of these and should collect for the use of pupils and teachers books which will supply them with helpful information, with inspiring biographies, with worship materials.

In one discussion with Juniors recently, the children expressed a desire to consult both a dictionary and a globe, as they do in public school. How many of our churches have these? One church has established a library and a reading room where there are the most modern books, maps, dictionary, globe, and magazines to which all pupils and teachers who need material for the class discussion may come. It is for study, not for entertainment. I believe we shall find an increasing need for such a provision.

CHAPTER VIII

How Do We Guide a Worship Experience?

"THE trouble with the Sunday School teachers of today," said the superintendent of a Young People's department to me recently, "is that they have no consecration. They don't know how to make prayer real to their pupils. When I was a boy I had a teacher who got all of us boys down on our knees and prayed in such a sincere way that we all knew she meant it and we have never gotten away from it. Now prayer means nothing to them. We can't even get our young people to come into the worship service planned for them. Most of them stay outside until time for class, or come late. What are we going to do about it?"

"Children of today are so different," says a mother. "I was raised in a home where we had family worship every day, but I could not for one moment expect my children to sit and listen to their father read the Bible and pray. They would

laugh at the idea. How can we have any religious life in the home?"

If we ask John himself about it, he tells us in no uncertain terms. "The service in Sunday School isn't interesting," he says. "Why should I waste my time on it?" As for family worship, he simply says, "It means nothing to me."

So we face a real problem. Is worship out of date? Do children, young people and adults have no hunger or appreciation for a real worship experience? Is there nothing we can do to make worship real to them?

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

When we begin to inquire whether the people of this modern day need worship we are faced with the experience of hundreds of our church members who have gone into the various cults in search of something which the church did not supply and which they simply had to have. As we talk with them to discover what they have found that gives satisfaction, we find that it is the habit of regular study of books which have been supplied and which give them a more satisfying interpretation of what God is like, why we have sickness and struggle, how to rise triumphantly above them with a serene spirit. And with it is the habit of

silence and meditation which produce an inner experience of God which gives them peace, confidence and serenity in place of fear and discouragement. One can find hundreds of people in our churches today hungry for just such experiences. Why cannot our churches give the people such books, such skill in meditation?

Worship is needed more desperately today than ever before by people of all ages, for two reasons.

1. The changing standards make our choices of conduct very difficult. We have to decide between two loyalties; we face new problems in which we cannot discern which solution is most Christ-like; we must choose which of many purposes in life will prove to be most satisfying. Alone, with only our own limited understanding and ability, we cannot decide such momentous questions safely. Only when we have put ourselves into harmony with God can we feel that our purpose is so much like His that we may safely choose what then seems best to us. Even then, we must often follow the direction that becomes a conviction to us in our moments of most prayerful searching, though we may not understand fully why this choice seems inevitable. I knew a high school girl of sixteen whose amazing experience reads like a novel be-

cause she took prayer seriously and "followed the gleam."

2. In this day when science has made us mechanically-minded and self-sufficient, many of our young people are finding no place in life for adventures of the spirit. Everything must be obvious and capable of proof. Yet even they cannot tell why the air is so constituted that a certain combination of wood and metal can bring into my room the music of a thousand miles away. They understand the laws of nature which produce new life in plants and animals, yet not one can explain or reproduce the germ of life that lies at the heart of it. We may well question why we have let a generation of young people grow up with their attention so thoroughly on the mechanical aspects of life that they have lost the realities of the spirit. Can we in the church develop a recognition that, as one child said, "if we go back far enough we always find God"? Can we help them to feel the wonder of God in His creation of new life, in His laws of the universe which make possible every invention and accomplishment of man? Can we give them the thrill of recognizing that we of this generation may be co-workers and creators with Him in pushing still further into the discovery and use of His laws of the material world and laws

of the spiritual world so that greater joy, more abundant life may come to men?

Worship that is intelligent will play a great part in helping the child, and indeed every growing person, to see himself in relation to God's purpose in the universe, to "see life steadily and see it whole," so that we may achieve triumphant living.

If worship is to do this, however, we cannot think of it as being merely a form or a service, whether in church, Sunday School or home. It must be a real experience, must be something which the individual lives through in his own mind. It must be based not on emotion alone, but on the kind of emotion that results from the most intelligent facing of problems and process of thinking. It must rest also on the most Christian conception of God and prayer, for many of our church members are still enmeshed in Old Testament notions and superstitions which prevent them from praying intelligently or from understanding what kind of results to expect. All of this involves the most careful, intelligent and regular program of training for worship and in worship. Just as we learn through actual experience rather than by knowing the facts about other people's experiences, so we worship when we are having an actual ex-

perience and not when we are hearing about those of others. Our grandfathers may have achieved real worship without training, except that of living in the presence of the worship of their elders, but the young people of today must understand far more than they did if prayer is to have any reality.

What, then, is worship? Do our children and young people naturally have such experiences? Can the church school bring about individual and group experiences in worship which are real and satisfying and from which we may expect experiences at home and elsewhere to follow?

Go to a girls' camp and watch the candle-lighting service in which, after story and poem and pledge, the hushed voices sing "Follow the Gleam," and you are convinced by the expressions of high idealism, reverence, purpose on the faces of the girls that worship is a real experience. Or see a friendship circle of boys as they pledge themselves to clean living and speaking. Watch a group of Juniors as they enter the church auditorium on Easter Sunday for a special worship service for children. The organ music and the flowers, the understanding of the meaning of Jesus' life which has become real to them in the weeks before, the quiet and dignified service bring

a look of keen joy in participation and of deep thoughtfulness to every face. One has no trouble with disorder among children if they are having a real experience.

Or sit in the church kindergarten as the children gather closely about the teacher to touch the tiny green blade that has burst from the little seed and see the awe and wonder on their faces as they look in silence and then burst into a song of joy and gratitude. There is no doubt that worship may be real, but visits to hundreds of Sunday Schools will convince us that very often the service does not become worship. The bored or passive faces, the restlessness, the whispering testify that no such experience is going on. We begin to realize that the leader of worship must be carefully trained, must know exactly what to do and how to do it. Worship does not "happen" any more than does careful discussion.

We shall direct our thought, then, to the essentials in a worship experience in the church school, and more briefly to the problem of the church service and the home. The church school as it is now conducted has two opportunities for worship—the formal service of the whole department, and the spontaneous worship in a class. We shall have both of these in mind.

A PART OF AN EXPERIENCE

1. In order that worship may be an experience of communion with God, I believe that first it must be centered about some real problem or significant experience. We do not worship in general but when facing some problem or need or when richer meaning may enter our present situation. The variety of these problems is endless—how does God send our food? how can this broken friendship be mended? how can our church become a house of worship? how can I be a more intelligent mother? how should America treat the Philippines? and so on without end.

Even the departmental worship, it seems to me, should not be entered into until the group has lived together through an experience which makes worship a natural expression of the desires, purposes and conclusions which have grown up. I visited a February worship service—on patriotism, of course. The hymns were glibly and thoughtlessly sung, the responsive reading was lustily read, a short talk on Lincoln was dutifully listened to, the prayer was read together. I doubt whether a single individual had an inner experience and had felt the presence of God.

In another school the department was planning

to send Good-will Treasure Chests to the Philippines. In the period of preparation for worship, the leader presented the whole political and industrial problem and the pupils faced the questions: What attitude is really responsible for the California trouble with Filipinos? How would the Filipinos in their own land feel about desiring to be a Christian nation? What responsibilities does America face? How can we as a group of Christians help to build the best attitudes at this time? When the worship began, with comments here and there by the leader, it helped the pupils to express in hymns, prayer, Scripture, pledge their own deep concern and desire.

Even formal worship, then, must be approached from such a background of experience that it is a natural, almost inevitable result of thinking about a situation in the light of God's part in it and our own relation to it. For that reason, it seems to me, each class experience should have spontaneous worship as a part of it, usually at the close of the period rather than at the beginning, for it is then that group and individual desires, purposes, convictions have come to a climax and can be easily expressed. Too often our teachers feel that all worship is to be left to the superintendent and do not realize that it is largely in the spontaneous

worship experiences of the class that the pupil will get the pattern and habit which will be most helpful in his individual prayer life when he is not at the church. The teacher who neglects worship in the class, then, is neglecting one of the most important elements of the religious development of the pupil.

2. It follows naturally that the pupils must have not only a desire to worship but an understanding of all the materials that are used and a carefully prepared program which includes only the materials that deal with this particular problem, arranged so that they lead the thinking and feeling and expression of the pupil naturally from a recognition of the problem to his own determination to help in its solution.

Children from the kindergarten through the Junior Department are usually taught to sing hymns without any idea as to the meaning. Even children's songs will not be clear unless they are discussed. A five-year-old startled her mother by saying, "God wasn't at Sunday School today."

"Who is God?" asked her mother.

"He must be a little boy who comes to our Sunday School, because sometimes we sing 'This is God's House and he is here today.'"

Juniors are often quite as puzzled over the "God

in three persons, blessed Trinity," and quite as often sing whole hymns without the slightest idea as to what they are about. A group of children who asked to sing Christmas carols were questioned as to the meaning of their favorites. Not one could tell what "We Three Kings of Orient Are" was about. It is quite as common to find children or older pupils saying the Lord's Prayer or rote prayers without the slightest notion as to their meaning. How, then, can there be worship in the use of these materials?

Again, the materials will be so chosen and put together that the thought of the group flows naturally through the whole. Recognizing the need or the problem, thinking of the righteousness and purposes of God, meditating on their own inadequacy without Him, the group comes to a desire to be co-workers with God and prays for strength and wisdom to do its share in making this a Christian universe.

When the service is going on, brief comments by the leader will serve to remind the children of the meaning of the material and the purpose of the worship. It will help adults to be thinking and feeling so that the service may become a real worship experience. In the chapel services of a ten-day institute the leader began by going

through carefully prepared and mimeographed services without a comment. The dignity of the service, he felt, demanded this. After a few days, a different leader was appointed. He opened the service and prefaced each hymn and reading with a single sentence of comment on its general meaning or purpose. He provided a time for silent prayer. The service had no less dignity, but many members of the group came to him with comments of appreciation. "I had a real experience of worship today," they said over and over.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF WORSHIP

A second main essential in worship is that we must have an atmosphere that makes worship possible. This can be provided in two ways.

1. The material surroundings must make for a feeling of worshipfulness. In many of our churches we have gone to the extreme of Puritanism in providing rooms that are bare, devoid of picture or symbol, lacking in everything that makes beauty. Many churches are now learning to create a worshipful effect in the front of the room by arranging a velvet background for a picture of Jesus and a table with a beautiful cross or candlestick or place for the Bible and offering plates. They also look into the orderliness of the chairs, the draperies at

the windows, the seating of the group so as to create a sense of fellowship and unity rather than scattering them over a large area. It is always necessary to study the room in which worship is to be held so as to discover all its possibilities.

Some small or overcrowded churches which have only basement and gymnasium rooms for the worship service are discovering a way of providing a rich environment for worship by arranging the schedule so that the children and young people may each have a period of worship in the church auditorium during a part of the Sunday School hour. Here the windows, flowers, organ all speak of worship.

Another element of the material environment which must be planned is the freedom of the group during worship from all distractions and interruptions. No late-comers, no announcements, no spectacular features should be allowed. A brief period for fellowship at some time other than the worship period should take care of all the interests of department life. This period must be kept free for quiet experiences. In many schools, the orchestra has been developed with such an emphasis on brass instruments and unworshipful orchestral music that it becomes impossible to have anything but a "pep meeting" in the group. The resulting

confusion and inattention make worship such a travesty that it is no wonder there is little evidence of inner experiences of worship going on during the service.

2. The service needs to make provision for some silence for meditation and individual prayer. Dr. Charles M. Sheldon has been calling our attention to the great need for this in modern worship. How can the individual feel that personal experience of God's presence when things are constantly going on about him to which he must give attention? The Quakers, the Catholics, and some of the cults have been quite right in providing a time in the service for meditation. Dr. Sheldon [1] suggests that the sermon should be almost the first thing in the church service in order to open up a field of thinking which will arouse a concrete center for worship. He would then give opportunity for silence, for hymns, and lastly for offering as an act of making oneself a part of the Kingdom program. In our present situation, judging from the passive faces one sees during the pauses in the communion service, which really offers a rare opportunity for a rich inner experience, our people

[1] Sheldon, "Why Not Turn It Around?" and "Prayer Meeting at 11 A.M.," articles in the *Christian Century* for July, 1929, and February, 1930.

need training in making meditation a helpful period.

TRAINING FOR WORSHIP

1. We have already noted the pupil's need for a study of the materials of worship. He needs to understand the hymns and prayers, to follow up the meaning of the story, to think of the human experience from which the Scripture was written, so that he may live through an experience of his own.

We need a careful evaluation of the hymns we use. In many of our schools we still have the cheap jazz with meaningless refrains, sung lustily and with rhythmic, sensuous swing which denies at once the presence of an experience centered in something holy and utterly beautiful. We can just as easily develop a real love for the quiet, strong hymns that describe or challenge real spiritual experiences.

Even the Junior children love the triumphant assurance of "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun," the long look over the past in "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand" and "O God Our Help in Ages Past." They love the challenge of "God Send Us Men Whose Aim 'Twill Be" and "In Christ There is No East or West." They

love the quiet descriptions of "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" and "O Master-Workman of the Race." And far more than we realize, they love the very quiet expression of inner longing in "I Need Thee Every Hour," that lovely old-fashioned "Sweet Hour of Prayer," and the hymn of consecration "Just As I Am, Thine Own to Be."

For the little children we need to eliminate the long story-songs and artificial, symbolic, "preachy" songs and introduce the simple ones that speak of the reality of God's care, His work in the world and our working with Him. One of the most ideal is "How Strong and Sweet My Father's Care." Not more than eight lines in a song for primary or four for kindergarten children will make them songs that can come from the heart and mind. Leaders need also to study worship to find the appropriate place for each hymn. A meeting should not open with "I Need Thee Every Hour" nor close with "Holy, holy, holy." It is a fascinating field of study to learn the most effective use for each type of hymn.

Beyond these essentials for each service are some general types of training which will need to be provided for the various departments so that at

each age-group the pupil is growing in his ability to worship.

2. Every few years he needs a study of his ideas of God, of how God works with men, and of prayer to discover what and how we should pray and what results to expect. Without these intelligent conceptions, he is likely to grope and blunder so much in his spiritual adventuring that he will be discouraged. He should study, too, to discover what worship is, how different groups worship differently, and what kind of worship experiences many great men have had which were real and helpful to them.

3. He needs to develop a skill in worship—in thinking as he reads or sings, in using silent time profitably, in expressing himself in prayer. The reason why most young people are too embarrassed to lead a group in prayer is not because they are not reverent or desirous of praying, but because they are not skilled in expressing themselves creditably. Why should we not help them to feel at home in prayer?

In our Dayton Week-day Schools of Religion we often came to the moment of prayer and then suggested "Each one of us has a different thing he would like to say to God about this problem

we have been thinking through [or conclusion to which we have come]. Suppose we each open our notebooks and write our prayer." When they had finished, we suggested "Perhaps three or four of you would like to read your prayer aloud so that it might become our class prayer for today." When a few had offered and the order in which they were to take part was made clear, we all bowed our heads and closed our eyes while one after another read his prayer as a prayer for the group. After six months of this training—it was not done at every meeting, of course—we were able to say, "Today we will each silently pray our own prayer, thinking it out instead of writing it." After a period of silence, a few would offer to pray aloud for the group prayer. In this way, children were trained for both silent and oral prayer.

One reason why this method is so helpful is that each individual prays the prayer that is natural to him and yet shares the prayers of others. It is interesting to note how very different are the prayers that follow a single discussion—as different, of course, as the pupils themselves. The three following prayers were written at the close of a discussion on the meaning of prayer and the kind of prayers we should pray. The first is by Sally,

aged 10; the second by Billy, aged 11; the third by Gordon, aged 12. The first reflects the child's concrete interest in those about her; the second the influence on the boy of the beautifully-worded group prayers offered by his socially-minded minister; the third shows the process of reasoning becoming desire—a boy who thinks keenly is sharing his best thoughts with God.

"Dear God, help the poor, who need more than I do, who have lost their good parents who were so fond of them. Help the people who are paralyzed in speech and cannot talk to you in the way they want." (Her home is not poor, her father is dead, her grandmother is ill.)

"Dear Father, we ask you to help the needy, to take the selfishness out of the hearts of the rich, to change the hearts of the cruel. Father, think of the helpless and the defenseless. In Jesus' name, Amen."

"Dear Father, we want you to teach us to pray for the things that are needed in life, but not only for ourselves but for all who dwell in the world. Give us the ability to pray a prayer that will help us all in needed ways. Teach us to learn about the Bible, and about you who art our Father, Amen."

PLACES AND TYPES OF WORSHIP

Coming back to our John and Helen, we may well ask, "Just what kinds of worship experiences do they need? What contribution does each kind make to their lives?" We shall look briefly at each of the four most common types.

1. *The Church School Class.* As we have said before, this is the place for John and Helen to have intensely real worship experiences because they take place in a small group of people of their own age, because in that group they are giving first attention to thinking through actual problems and developing knowledge and attitudes which give an intelligent background to worship, and because they express themselves individually and spontaneously. This is an extremely important type of worship because it is so close to the type which becomes a part of their daily lives, and yet it is one of the most neglected.

The teacher will need to be careful always to use prayer when it is natural to and desired by the group. Often in the midst of a discussion there will be a deep feeling evident in the class. Then a single sentence of prayer by the teacher, talking to God in a natural way, will make the pupils feel His nearness or presence, His concern over

these same problems, His ability to help us to develop more Christian attitudes or to give us a sense of direction toward solution, His joy at having us as co-workers with Him. Most often, probably, the most natural moment will be at the summing up of the whole experience at the close of the period. Then pupils will find it easy to participate. A hymn read or sung softly together, or a poem that expresses the spirit of the class often helps to make the prayer more natural. Sometimes the mood of the class becomes light or the pupils restless. This is not the moment for prayer. Group prayer in an effort to bring them back to a serious purpose is more likely than anything else to make prayer unreal to them.

2. *The Departmental Service.* We can see at once that the traditional schedule of one-half hour for worship and one-half hour for class is quite inadequate. We shall consider here only the period of worship. The least that we can have for intelligent worship in the Junior department, for instance, is a 10-minute period of fellowship, a 25-minute period of preparation on new materials and the general problem or theme that is being faced, and a 15-minute period of worship. This immediately calls for a longer session, which will be discussed in Chapter X. As the period is arranged now

it is so inadequate as to make it most difficult to keep the respect and interest of the pupils.

Another problem is the custom of having worship during the first half hour of the school. The tradition of arriving late is so strong as to make many apologetic if they arrive on time, yet a worship experience certainly cannot go on when late arrivals are entering. Many schools are trying the experiment of putting the class first and the worship last, and this at least makes worship a possibility. Since the class has always seemed the important part, the pupils will make more effort to get there on time. Then, too, the pupils are more prepared mentally for a quiet, unified experience during the later period than when they first enter in the morning. The custom of having the worship follow the class period is likely to become an important trend of the times. Usually, I believe, the leadership of such a service needs to be entirely in the hands of a person who has thought through the purposes, methods and materials of worship, who knows pupils of this age well enough to know what appeals to them and how to weld them into a group who are thinking and feeling together. The individual worshipers need to be as little conscious of themselves as possible. As soon as immature people begin leading the group, it

becomes a program and not an inner experience shared with others. There is place now and then for a service led by the young people themselves, but I believe that it should not be the regular service every week.

In this departmental service will come the experiences of worship that have to do with seasons and special church days, problems of community and world relationships, development of appreciations for great Kingdom achievements of past and present, decisions to choose and practice the highest ideals of Christian character as they enter into the lives of these particular pupils, and so on. Just how formal this service should be depends upon the desire of the leader and group. All kinds of experiments are going on to find the type of worship most desirable. Leaders may find helps in the various denominational papers, a few books of collected and prepared services, and in the *International Journal of Religious Education.* The leader should learn, however, to adapt these to the needs of his own group.

If all these things are done, there will be challenge and appeal in the departmental worship service. When our young people know that here we are facing significant problems of life and the modern world, that every minute is planned

for something that is important to them, they will not be standing outside the church nor going to their own classrooms.

3. *The Church Worship Service.* We have already indicated that preachers are giving a good deal of attention to a reëxamination of the adult worship service of the church in an attempt to make it a real experience. There is no doubt that we shall have to make some changes both in the eleven o'clock service and in the Adult Department of the church school before we can get a hunger for both in the lives of the adults.

Since both of these have been previously discussed, we may well turn our attention to the problem of the children and Intermediates. All kinds of experiments with children are going on to find the most satisfactory method of training them for participation in the church. Perhaps no one plan will prove ultimately the best for every situation. So much depends upon the leadership. However, certain principles are beginning to emerge. In this brief space they can be stated only as the writer sees them.

We begin to agree that forcing John to attend a service that has no meaning for him may have as many undesirable as desirable outcomes, in this day in which school, books, pictures are made

especially for his understanding, in which he needs to spend every hour in preparation for living in the most intelligent way possible. Three other plans are being tried.

The Junior Church is established to give John and Helen an experience so much like the adult service that the transition from one to the other at the proper age will be easy. It often prepares them for participation in the management of the church by giving them the management of their own organization—its budget, officers, program. With unusual leadership this plan may be valuable, but it often becomes either too adult and "dry" or utilizes special features and becomes entertainment. Often, too, the management by the children is nominal only, having been predetermined by the adults. No real boys and girls like to go through mere motions.

The fundamental difficulty with the Junior Church is that one hour is too long a period for children to sit still in one service unless there has been some vigorous activity during the period preceding. It puts the child into a series of three quite unrelated services during the morning—the departmental period, the class, the church. Each one does its work poorly because of lack of time.

A second plan has been conceived by some of

our leaders who have seen the possibility of creating a single unified experience for a two and a half or three hour period. In this longer period various types of activities would be engaged in, but the same leadership throughout for each class would use all activities to secure for John and Helen and each other child the maximum development in attitudes and habits, in knowledge and skills. Undoubtedly this plan is far beyond any yet conceived by the church, but there are many practical difficulties which will be discussed in Chapter X. If it is the best plan for the child, then we need to overcome obstacles.

A third plan is that of taking the Junior group into the adult church service during the opening worship and just before the anthem and sermon having them go into another room where the leader may give them an experience which will be as meaningful to them as the sermon is to the adult. After experiences with three groups in such a plan, I personally feel that such an experience may be of very great value in lifting John to a level and scale of worship a little beyond his own and so making it challenge him to growth. It is of value, too, in helping him to feel himself a part of this great group of adults. Then when we talk with him of the meaning of becoming a

member of the organized society of Christians for work and worship, he has a background of meaning for it.

It seems to me to have most value if John and Helen do not feel they are doing anything unusual but are having an experience as natural to them as adult attendance is to the adult. I do not care for processionals of children, special features to include them, or even a children's sermon, which often wastes the time of both adults and children. I should have their coming and going as matter-of-fact and unobtrusive as possible.

Much depends on the way in which the sermon time is spent. One should not duplicate the departmental worship service. I have found it helpful to use the time as preparation for both church and church school worship. They can study the church building, the elements of the adult service, the hymns to be used in that service, the Lord's Prayer and the various responses sung by the congregation. The period can be used for special study of world friendship problems or the group may return to their classrooms for further work on their own field of study there.

An important element of such a plan is that of seeing that at the proper age, John and Helen are not only promoted into the adult service but

trained to attend to the sermon and really participate in the thought. The age of promotion depends upon the intellectual level of the congregation. It ranges from the time of entrance into Junior High School to that of entrance into Senior High School. We have found it helpful to carry on some study with the class for three months after their promotion into the adult service and recognition of the group by the pastor and congregation. Discussion of the church service and several of the sermons might go on in a monthly meeting of the group. Cards not only checking their attendance but providing a space for the pupil to write the main thought of the sermon are handed in. This secures their attention to the sermon and is excellent training for them.

4. *Worship in the Home.* Parents must find new wineskins for the wine of this generation. Some are doing this admirably. Instead of the set reading of Scripture and prayer by the father, they are finding new ways of making worship a natural part of family life.

One family with seven members took a few minutes at evening dinner to make the prayer more than a table grace. On each day of the week one of the seven had the responsibility of giving

some Scripture that had meaning for him and of leading in a prayer about the matters that really concerned the family.

Another had a Sunday evening vesper hour when lunch was served about the fireplace. There favorite hymns were sung, poems read, and a closing prayer given. Even the four-year-old asked for his favorite hymn. If now and then a friend came in, he was drawn into the circle. The experience was so beautiful that it is one of the happiest memories of home for the oldest ones who have recently married and gone into homes of their own.

One of the finest customs I know is that of a family who set aside one hour each week when no other engagements were to break in. At this time the parents and three children talked over the events of the week with the purpose of keeping the family a happy Christian home group. There were incidents over which they must express gratitude to God, problems that needed the combined advice, consideration, decision and action of the whole group, incidents which had caused rebellion and hurt that needed to be rethought in the light of this hour and new attitudes taken. Matters of budget, of friendships, of permissions, of home responsibilities—all these as-

sumed a new aspect when seen in the light of a common Christian purpose, of family love, of God's share in the family life. The prayers that closed the hour were the most real and valuable kind of worship.

The custom of table and bedtime prayers needs to be re-thought, also. How often we give the little child the feeling that prayer is a childish activity only, because we have the baby say the table grace. We "hear" the bedtime prayers, we teach childish poems for prayers instead of challenging their own best thinking. We can never expect prayer to be real to our children unless father and mother also pray in their presence at table and bedtime, unless, now and then at least, the gratitude and concerns of the family are expressed in the family circle as if God were really a member of it. There has never been in my mind any doubt as to the reality of God's presence, any question as to the vitality of prayer because our family prayer experiences were as natural as breathing, as regular as food. We knew that in times of indecision God's guidance was sought, that certain things happened which became our clear direction; we took part in and experienced the answers to prayers on problems of money, of moving, of illness, of neighborly relations. Parents must share with

their children the matters about which they feel most keenly and believe most sincerely if they would make religion real.

CONCLUSION

Our church school leaders are becoming more and more sure that vitality in worship lies at the heart of vitality in religion. They are thinking and experimenting more carefully than ever before to find the most effective forms, materials, methods. We must take it seriously and realize that much of the final effectiveness of our work will depend upon our success in developing rich worship experiences in the lives of our pupils.

BOOKS YOU WILL ENJOY

This set of books should be owned by every church school and read by every leader:

BAKER, EDNA DEAN—*The Worship of the Little Child.* Abingdon Press.

BALDWIN, JOSEPHINE—*Training the Juniors in Worship,* Abingdon Press.

BLASHFIELD, CLARA B.—*Training the Primary Children in Worship.* Abingdon Press.

JONES, MARY A.—*Training Juniors in Worship.* Cokesbury Press.

For mothers and teachers of children:

DARR—*Children's Prayers as Recorded by Their Mother.* A delightful record of the spontaneous prayers of four boys.

MUMFORD—*The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of a Child.* A help in building the child's first ideas of God and prayer. Many incidents are told. Longmans, Green & Co.

BETTS, ANNA F.—*The Mother Teacher of Religion.* For the mother of two- and three-year-olds. Abingdon Press.

SHIELDS, ELIZABETH—*Worship and Conduct Songs for Beginners and Primaries.* This collection is especially good. So. Presbyterian Press.

A committee—The Children's Story Garden. A collection of especially good stories for all ages which illustrate the Quaker emphasis on love as the basis of all human relations. Lippincott & Co.

CRANDALL—A Curriculum of Worship for the Junior Church School. In 3 volumes. Helpful services in which the preparation for worship is planned as carefully as the service itself. Century Co., publishers.

A study of the worship services in Carrier, *The Kingdom of Love*, will suggest materials and methods. A study of those recorded in Sweet and Fahs *Exploring Religion with Eight Year Olds* will show how discussion following the worship is often valuable.

For adolescents and adults:

SHAVER AND STOCK—*Training the Young People in Worship.* Pilgrim Press.

HARTSHORNE—*Manual of Training in Worship.* Chas. Scribner's Sons.

HARTSHORNE—*Stories for Worship and How to Follow Them Up.* Charles Scribner's Sons.

EGGLESTON, MARGARET—*Fireside Stories for Girls in*

Their Teens, Camp-fire Stories for Boys, and other books of worship stories. Richard R. Smith, Inc.

HYDE—*Prayers for Boys.* A charming book of prayers for adolescents.

STACY—*Worship for Youth*—A book of worship services. Powell and White.

Magazine—*The International Journal of Religious Education.* Published monthly at 203 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. Has a service for each department.

All leaders should also read the chapter on worship in Miss Kerschner's *Missionary Education of Intermediates,* mentioned under chapter 4.

For the arrangement of room and schedule:

Rodgers and Schutz. *Techniques of Public Worship.* Methodist Book Concern.

McCallum—*The Graded Church.* Bethany Press.

CHAPTER IX

What Kind of Memory Work Is Desirable?

MRS. HAY, the Junior superintendent was talking to Mrs. Fox, a superintendent from another church. "We are very proud of our children's memory work," she said. "Almost every child in the department is able to recite the twenty passages we have selected and receives a book as a reward. Of course, it does take a great deal of time for each child to be heard by the teacher, but we do want our children to know a lot of the Bible when they leave our department."

"So do we," replied Mrs. Fox, "but I have been making some changes in our memory work since I took the course in the training school last spring. I take time to help the children understand the meaning of each passage and I believe they get a great deal more out of it."

"Oh, I've heard all those new notions," said Mrs. Hay, "and I just can't see that they do any good. Most of the departments that follow them don't learn nearly as much as our children do."

"I don't believe we ought to judge by how much they know," replied Mrs. Fox, "but I can't explain why. Let's go to visit Miss Bennett, the teacher I had last spring and ask her about it. She is the supervisor of the Week-day Schools of Religion."

It will be helpful for us to go with these two superintendents and discover with them what the new theory tells us about memory work and whether it is as valuable to the child as the old theory.

COMPARING THE OLD AND NEW THEORIES

As soon as Miss Bennett hears the difficulty, she explains that Mrs. Hay feels as she does because of what the Herbartian theory taught her about the child's mind. She is thinking that John's mind must store up all the beautiful and valuable passages of Scripture which he can learn, so that when he is grown he can readily call these back to inspire and guide him. Even if he does not understand them now, Mrs. Hay feels that the meaning will come to him when he is old enough. All that Mrs. Hay has to do, then, is to choose as many passages as she can cover each year, drill the children, hear them recite, and reward them.

Miss Bennett explains, as we did in Chapter II, how it has been proved that we cannot call back for use that which we, as children, learned without meaning. She tells them that she has tested her oldest pupils and found that they cannot repeat anything they learned as little children except the Lord's Prayer and Psalm 23, which they remember because they have continued to use them each year. She has found, too, that the Lord's Prayer has very little meaning for them; she has discovered that in some places they do not even use the right words because they learned it "by ear" rather than from the printed page. It becomes clear to Mrs. Hay, then, that only a small proportion of what she is teaching the children by this rote method will be useful to them either now or later.

Miss Bennett also explains, as we did in Chapter II, what we mean when we say that the child learns only by experience. She shows them that just as he learns more by discussing, by learning to find the meaning of life through thinking for himself than by reciting from a book, so he will learn far more from memorizing if it is a passage which helps him to understand what other people have learned from experience, and which he learns

at a time when his own experiences make him ready to appreciate and use their conclusions.

She invites them to visit some of her classes to see how the memory work is a part of the whole experience of the children, how it comes to have meaning for them, and how they find a purpose for learning it that adds at once to their interest and effort.

INTERPRETING MEMORY WORK

We will visit some of the classes with them. The first is a fifth grade group. Because of some problems which the children brought up a few weeks before, as to whether it makes much difference if you cheat at games and whether it is sometimes justifiable to cheat in lessons, they have been discussing such choices in the light of the laws of living together in the best way. They see that these are laws of God because He made us so that certain results follow certain choices. Today the teacher tells the group that a poet long ago in thinking of just these same problems wrote a poem about it. He decided that there are really two main classes of people. His poem has become well known because it tells us so clearly what it means to be in one class or the other. She reads the whole

of Psalm 1 so that as they listen they may get the whole thought in their minds.

The children help to work out the description of the first man by putting each phrase into their own words. The teacher writes these phrases on the blackboard so that they may have them to look at during the whole discussion. She is even thoughtful enough to have a dictionary so that the children may look up words that are not clear to them, as they do at public school. Mrs. Fox notices how much more earnest the children are in their discussion than they were in Sunday School and wonders if the blackboard and dictionary have anything to do with it.

The list of ideas on the board tells that the first man is one who does not take the advice of wrongdoers, or associate with them, or laugh at people who are doing right. He is a man who knows God's laws so well that he can think of them at any moment when he has to decide what to do.

"But," Miss Bennett says, "the poet says that this first man is like a tree." The children make a mental picture of this tree as the teacher reads again the description. Then she asks, "Why did the poet say that this man is like that kind of a tree?" Three boys raise their hands and give three reasons that are refreshingly original.

"The tree holds fast to the ground for strength and the man goes to God for strength."

"The tree holds up its branches to God and the man holds up his life to God."

"Such a tree is doing what it was made for and such a man is doing what he was made for."

The other kind of man is like chaff. Why? One child suggests that chaff is of no value, neither is the man who pays no attention to God's laws. And another, that such a man changes about from one way to another without getting anywhere.

Now the teacher suggests that our poet closes the poem with an interesting conclusion. Even if a man cannot always pick out the people who are trying to follow God's laws, God knows and appreciates the purpose of each one. He knows which man's way of living will really last and be of value and which will perish.

She asks if they know of men who chose the way of remembering the laws of God or those who chose the other way, so that they might see which lives have perished and which will remain always with us. They compare the lives of men like Samuel and David and Paul, like Abraham Lincoln and David Livingstone with those of men like Jacob and Samson and modern wrongdoers whose ways perish or have no value.

The class now sees the poem again as a whole and tries to connect the meaning of it with many other things they know—pictures they have seen, incidents from history, poems which express the same thought, incidents from their own lives which illustrate the truth.

The teacher discusses with the class further plans for a program which they are going to give for their parents and some one suggests that this psalm would sum up very nicely their work for the last two months and might follow the dramatization and hymn they planned to use. They agree to memorize it so as to have it given in concert by the class. The teacher gives directions for learning it and has a period for silent study.

As the class is dismissed, one boy says confidentially to the teacher, "I'm going to say that over every morning so it will keep me from telling my answers to Buck Rogers when he wants me to. I don't believe the man who is like a tree would tell the answers to his problems."

The two superintendents stay to ask Miss Bennett several questions, but Mrs. Hay is ready to admit that her children do not understand and love the memory selections as did these children. We shall sum up the questions and answers as a summary for our own thinking.

SUMMARY

1. How would you choose your memory selections?

I would choose Biblical passages, hymns, poems that express in a beautiful, concise way the convictions and conclusions that have risen out of other human experience which will inspire and guide my pupils in the experiences we are thinking through together in our study or in our preparation for special Christian days. I would always prefer one longer selection to a number of short verses which, taken from their setting, would not have much meaning. I would see that everything that is memorized becomes a part of a real experience to them—real because it has meaning now and can be used in a practical way at once and because it is connected with many other things they have been thinking and deciding. Sometimes this use is for their own worship services in class.

2. How would you find meaning for some of the single verses or short passages we teach to Primary children?

For instance, with the verse "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other," I would have the children see Paul working, traveling, teaching, preaching to help these first

churches to understand what it means to be Christian. When he visits them he finds them quarreling, criticizing, hating. He wants them to see how important it is to show real kindness as Jesus did. And to this short verse, I would add a song, a poem or a prayer, which, taken together, give the children a single meaning which can be used again and again in their lives together in the church school and so will come into their minds when they have similar needs for showing kindness in other places.

3. But with all this time taken for interpreting, you would never have time for teaching as many selections as we now do. If they don't learn them now, they never will. Besides, your course of study might never include naturally some of the passages we think are important for them to know. How would you ever get them in?

There is so much beautiful and helpful wisdom literature in the world that my pupil John will never be able to master it all. I shall have to choose carefully to select for him that which is going to explain life most fully, make the world most beautiful, help him to see God in everything, give him courage and wisdom to discover and practice always the Christian relationships with those whom he meets, hold the highest standards for

himself. If at each age—when he is six, eight, ten and so on, he has those things which help him to live and think and worship as fully as he can at that age, he will be ready at the next step for something beyond.

Our trouble has been that we take for granted that adults will stop learning. That is what happened too often to those who grew up under the Herbartian theory. They were given as children everything they could possibly learn and then graduated out of the learning process. Perhaps the reason that adults now do not relish memorizing is because they learned so many things that had no meaning for them. At any rate, our present movement for adult schools is proving that adults can learn and enjoy learning the things that are now interesting and helpful to them. One mature woman who took a course in college after she had a family of children said, "Isn't it strange how we learned all those things when we were young? We hadn't an idea then what Browning was about or what psychology was trying to teach us. Now that we have lived longer, we can study them, really love them and find them helpful."

A Sunday School class of young married women during a study of Jesus' life set themselves the task of learning the Beatitudes because they

wanted to be able to summarize in their own minds at any moment the kind of people who are citizens of the Kingdom of God for which Jesus worked so ardently. Probably every one had learned them as a child when they meant very little. Now they were to be guides to choices in life.

We need not be concerned about the really important passages not being covered by our courses of study. If we are thinking of the seven objectives (Chapter IV) and so of Christian life in its broadest sense, and if we are teaching through the pupil's experience, there is not a really important passage that will not become appropriate again and again. All that we need to do is to ask, "What selections in the Bible or elsewhere express most beautifully and concisely this truth in terms that a pupil of this age shall be able to enter into?" If we know our Bible thoroughly, we shall find place for all the really important selections.

In fact, we have undoubtedly laid heavy emphasis in the past on many psalms and prophecies that are beyond the pupil's experience and omitted such significant passages as Matt. 5:38-48 and 22:34-40. This principle will also properly place the passages as to age-level. Instead of expecting little six-year-olds to mouth the Lord's prayer when many of the words can mean nothing, we shall

wait to give it to eight- or nine-year-old children, who, after careful discussion and stories about Jesus, may begin to find the meaning. A question needs to be raised as to how old the child must be before he can understand analogy. It is now generally believed that to ask him to think of God's spiritual care for us in terms of the shepherd's physical care for his sheep (and the shepherd is a person about whom our modern children know little) is a task beyond the powers of those younger than ten.

4. How would you teach a selection after you have interpreted it? Would you hear each child recite separately and give him a grade or reward for it?

I would not begin memorizing until we had found some use to which it could be put. Often the class will want to use it in a worship service, for what we teach is, of course, for appreciation, not for facts. Then I would do three things.

Give the class time for study, showing them how to go over the whole selection several times, or if it is too long to be learned as a whole, break it into as few long sections as possible. Have the class say it together after a certain brief study period. We often give too long a period and they do not study intensively enough to fix it in mind.

Have several short periods for study and group recitation, gradually increasing the time between practices. Work on it every week until it is well learned, then use it in review or worship every few weeks for some time. Refresh the memory by having the pupils read the printed page each time until it is very thoroughly learned, so that they do not grow careless in the use of the words.

Help the class to take a pride in the accuracy and meaningfulness of their finished work and a joy in sharing it with others. This natural or intrinsic reward is far better than any artificial reward.

5. Would you have the children memorize the names of the books of the Bible?

The only reason why they should is the reason for which they learn the alphabet, for purposes of finding references quickly. Many leaders now feel that if the children know the story of the Hebrews from patriarch through prophet and of how the Bible was made, they will get an idea of the approximate position of each book as, through discussion, they discover what each book is about and therefore where it fits into the whole. These leaders feel that this intelligent use of the Bible is far more likely to stay with the child than a memorization of mere names.

In a program for parents, a group of children gave original talks. Each one summarized the course he had studied for the year, explained a selection from the Bible that expressed the same idea, and then repeated it. When the program was over, many parents were heard to remark, "Well, I wish I had understood what I learned when I was a child. I might know a great deal more today. These children don't know how fortunate they are."

We have the opportunity of making every element of the child's educational experience highly valuable because it has meaning.

CHAPTER X

What Changes Should Be Made in Our Church Schools?

"I THOUGHT when you helped our teachers to know how to use the new courses that our problems would all be settled," said a Primary Department superintendent recently, "but we are having more problems than before."

"I am not surprised," replied the leader, "but just what are the new problems?"

"Well, the teachers just can't get through the lesson in thirty minutes, now that they are using discussion. There isn't time for discussion, stories, activity and worship in such a short period. Then, the teachers want to use the better kind of activity and to have spontaneous worship, but they simply can't do it with the room so full of tables that they are against each other. Yet there isn't any more floor space available. We are having a dreadful time."

The leader smiled, "It's a case of new wine in

old bottles, you see. You may have to change the surroundings."

So the two attacked the problem to see what might be done. So many schools are finding that these new conceptions of method demand other adjustments that it may be well to consider some of the changes being tried out in various schools, some of the tendencies throughout the country. Each school will, of course, have to find its own best way of managing the situation, but the experience of others may prove helpful in the study of your own situation.

1. *The Schedule.* With the old method of merely teaching information about the Bible and requiring recitation and memory work, we could teach the lesson in thirty minutes. But with our new emphasis on the development of understanding, of desire, of habits, with the emphasis on discussion, activity and spontaneous worship, we find that the work cannot be done in this short time. As we have it now, with the superintendent leading a worship service and the teacher having the class, we have two separate periods of thirty minutes, with each leader trying to do a different piece of work.

One experiment that is gaining ground is to have each class spend the entire hour with one teacher so

that she may work out a program which includes all the elements of learning and worship in one compact, unified experience. This experiment is most common in the kindergarten and the Primary Department, though several Junior departments have tried it with satisfying results. The problem of separate rooms which is raised here is discussed under point three in this chapter.

Many departments that are not trying this particular plan have found that it proves more effective to have the class period first, followed by the departmental worship. While this involves the development of greater punctuality, it brings the children into the worship service with their thoughts already tuned to the desires that they are to express. Their class experience has brought them into a group ready to think and feel together, and they are far more ready for worship than when they first enter the building in the morning. Whether or not the worship is the first period, it should be divided into two parts, the preparation for worship, which includes conversation about the theme and interpretation of new materials, and a quiet undisturbed experience in worship.

Many church schools are trying also the longer Sunday period so that the children are having two and one half or three hours of church experience.

We must remember, however, that more time is not the only need. Quality of experience is of most importance. Unless there is really good leadership and a well-planned program, it is not wise to try out this plan. In some churches the longer session sets up four quite unrelated periods—the class and the worship in the present Sunday School, attendance at the church worship service until time for the sermon, a group period for stories or talks, often for missionary instruction. There is often different leadership for each period.

We must face the need for a unification of the Sunday program. Some churches are giving first an ample and unhurried time for the class period which includes supervised study, discussion, various types of activity (such as memorizing, writing, constructing, dramatizing) and spontaneous worship; and secondly a formal or group worship experience as training for church life and for the larger needs and interests. This period includes both preparation and worship. Each of these two major periods fill an hour. The present situation in churches is making such an ideal program difficult, but experimentation will continue.

When this longer period is tried it is particularly important that the pupils should be under as few teachers as possible. One church tried the longer

session with a different group of volunteer teachers for each Sunday in the month. Of course, the work lacked continuity and well-prepared plans and the children quickly lost respect for it and dropped out. The best plan is undoubtedly a regular teacher for each group of twenty or twenty-five for the entire three hours. Because this makes great demands on the teacher's time, it is but right that some remuneration should be made. This also makes possible a careful selection of teachers.

Another church which has a ten months' program has two groups of teachers, each one taking the full three hours for five months. Both the teaching staff and the attendance should be as continuous as possible. It is therefore wise to have the children make a decision to enroll in the longer session and to expect regular attendance of all those who are enrolled in it.

The young people and adults also need a unified program. It is more and more generally felt that their major worship experience should be the adult worship service, and that the church school period should give them a period of fifty minutes for discussion in classes, with related worship as a part of the experience, and a period of twenty minutes in departmental assembly for fellowship,

group plans, talks concerning their common interests. It would be understood, then, that the group had not had a formal worship experience and needed to remain for the church service for it.

2. *The Teacher.* The newer approach to the teaching of religion has made evident the necessity of having teachers who understand the newer methods and are prepared to do a thorough piece of work. Some churches are paying really skilled teachers for their work because they realize what a large demand such work makes on the teacher. This is a day when we do not hesitate to pay for the skilled services of preachers, pulpit supplies, and musicians, and yet we often fail to see the need of paying for the skilled services of the leaders of children. We must realize that children are forming conceptions of God, of prayer, of right living which will be the basis of thinking throughout their whole lives. When we adults pay for skilled leadership for ourselves and leave the training of our children in the hands of utterly untrained leaders, we have the most shortsighted and absurd situation possible.

Many churches who cannot secure a full staff of trained teachers are providing their Sunday School teachers with a supervising teacher or "helping teacher" who has made a special study

of religious education and who can help them in preparing their lessons, determining on the activities and thinking through what is to be taught about God, prayer and so on. Still other churches pay the tuition of their teachers for courses in community training schools, universities or summer schools. All these are steps in advance.

Sometimes when a skilled teacher has been employed or secured for a class and is a professional man or woman who has little time to give except that for the Sunday class, the school secures an associate teacher from among the women who are home-makers and who are able to give of their time to the service of the church. These women act as assistants in making calls on the home, in planning the social or recreational life of the class, and in carrying out the details of administration.

Quite as much attention must be given to the teachers of young people and adults as to those of the children. Throughout the school we need teachers who have a broad understanding of Christian affairs in the world today, an historical appreciation of the Bible and the thrilling story of the gradual progress and development of man in his understanding of God and the universe, a thoroughly Christian interpretation of life. Pupils of every age deserve to be exposed to fellowship

with such an individual so as to develop their own deeper understanding, to be free to ask their own most puzzling questions. The teacher of today simply cannot discharge his responsibility well unless he is a student, working constantly to enlarge his own horizons and increase his own understanding.

3. *Size of Classes and Separate Rooms.* There is a decided tendency to enlarge the size of the classes of children and decrease the very large classes of adults. The classes averaging five children are changing to an average of twenty, providing there are enough children to do this and still have not more than two grades in a class. This larger class is due to the need of skilled teachers and of more varied activities and therefore of separate classrooms where worship or activity may go on undisturbed. The smaller class was advocated because we thought the teacher should know each child intimately, should call in his home, should be able to draw him out in class so as to give personal help in his problems of thinking and living. This is perhaps ideal, but practically no church has available so many highly skilled leaders that they can place one in each group of five or six pupils. The question must be raised as to whether the skilled teacher of twenty pupils does

not often do more good than the unskilled teacher with five. When she visits the home, when she hears a child's comment in class, she knows what to look for, what to do about it. Moreover, it has proved true in my own experience that twenty pupils are more stimulated to clear thinking, less self-conscious, and more ready for dignified study than a small, informal, embarrassed group.

So the larger class makes possible the choice of only the stronger teachers. Because there are fewer groups, it makes possible separate classrooms or screened-off rooms in the same floor space where there was previously a crowded condition. A serious objection to these screened-off rooms has been that the noise is greatly increased when several classes are in the same room but cannot see each other. This, however, is due to the bad habit common to Sunday Schools of allowing all the pupils to talk at once. Children are not allowed to do this at school; adults consider it rude and in such bad form that they would not think of doing it in other public meetings. It would seem quite possible that the church school can change this tradition to a habit of the same courtesy and efficiency as are shown elsewhere.

Another tendency is to have boys and girls studying together through the Junior age and

sometimes the Intermediate. As in school, the presence of both boys and girls in a class stimulates the thinking of both groups and bases the work on real study rather than "gang" fellowship or social life as we have it now.

In the adult class, the group must be small enough for discussion—a group of forty can often carry on discussion to advantage if the leader is skillful in stimulating thought and leading group thinking, but usually no larger group than this.

4. *Curriculum.* The emphasis on experience as the center of our teaching of religion gives the church two new attitudes toward curriculum. First, the teacher realizes that only a graded course of study can meet the needs of the child at each stage of his development. He finds that the uniform lessons, planned not at all for this task, cannot make the experience of the pupil the center of his church school experience. So the church turns to one of the closely graded or group-graded courses which attempt to give to teacher and pupils the materials which will meet their needs.

But while it is true that there are certain bits of knowledge, experiences, appreciations which every ten-year-old child will need, there are often specific needs of a particular class which make a certain type of course desirable. A teacher may

feel that her boys need at a particular time an appreciation of the church which is not provided in the regular course of study. Or they may be much interested in finding out where the Bible came from. Or they may need a course which provides more definite home work. It is becoming increasingly common for teachers, in conference with the superintendents, to choose from among all the courses that are published, both denominational and independent, the one that most nearly meets the needs of their particular group.

Second, the church discovers that the curriculum is not just the teaching material. The child learns not only through his course of study, but through the worship, through the service activities, through the social and recreational life of the group, through all that happens as he is associated with the church. So we are beginning to see that we must plan carefully every contact with the child, every experience which he has in the church so that it contributes to his Christian development. A party may be an important influence in his life if properly planned. It is the total of all these experiences that our church now calls the curriculum and in which the church must train its teachers.

5. *Special Programs.* With these new aims of developing insight and appreciation, habits and

attitudes, the school begins to change the type of program to be given on special days. It is not an entertainment for the parents nor a harassing nightmare for the "trainers" nor an orgy of fun for the children. Nor is it a matter of reciting material in which they have been carefully trained. The special program becomes rather a sharing with other members of the school some of the beautiful thoughts and materials and experiences from the regular school work of the children, or the creation of beautiful representations of stories or scenes that have come to have new meaning for them. Usually these programs take the form of a worship service planned by the children or a dramatic activity created by them, and the very fact that they are of their own creation will make them of lasting religious value. They are often more beautifully done than the stereotyped programs of other days, but to accomplish these results, to plan and guide such a program requires experience and skill. One or two leaders in each school should prepare themselves especially for this work.

6. *Parents' Training.* We have discussed the fact that the aim of building habits and tendencies is a larger task than that of acquiring information. Indeed we have come to see that it simply cannot

be accomplished in one day of the week. The long stretch of six days between class sessions allows much wrong practice, many blunders in choice, many experiences that bewilder or disappoint. John and Helen need some one who has the same conception of God and of Christian character, the same values for life, the same understanding of child nature as the Sunday teacher, in order to guide them through these daily experiences so that they are in harmony with the special attention being given to them on Sunday. It has become more and more evident that parents need to be trained for this task. Churches are beginning to experiment in this field. Our own recent experience leads us to several conclusions.

a. Parents are hungering for this preparation to give real religious guidance to the children of this new generation who are so bewildering.

b. A very good plan is to have a special class on Sunday morning for mothers of children from one to six, with a monthly meeting held in the evenings for both mothers and fathers of all the church school children. With the multiplying of home problems today, the church can provide for them no experience which is more religious. Most of us would see at once the absurdity of the criticism that was made of one such class, that

they were not religious because they were not studying the Bible. One who has worked with mothers knows that there is no moment at which there is a more dynamic religious experience than the time spent in just such a study to become skilled in the best understanding and guidance of their children.

c. It is helpful to establish a circulating library for these parents. There are now so many readable and helpful books prepared for parents that this is one of the most effective means of adult education. In one school thirty-five dollars established a very helpful library.

d. The leaders of such a class must be thoroughly trained in the materials and points of view of this field. There are now university and correspondence courses and helpful books available to the person who would train himself for such leadership. There is no class in the church that must be so sure of having wise leaders as this. It is extremely dangerous to have a group of mothers get together and exchange opinions which are not in line with the knowledge of psychology and education today.

7. *The Board of Religious Education.* Who is to give the school its sense of direction, its standards and policies, its steady growth? Many

churches are facing this problem. The school business is cared for by the Sunday School board, the superintendent of each department chooses his own teachers, the school runs on in a more or less haphazard fashion. The school is modern, well ordered, progressive in one department and conservative and noisy in another, depending on the type of leadership in each. John respects the church for three years in one department and then loses his respect for it because of the lower standards in another department. Sometimes he even objects to being promoted because he respects the work of his present department. Or he does a serious, fine piece of work in the morning school, and breaks down all habits of reverence in the evening young people's service. What shall the church do about it?

Many churches have established a Board of Religious Education whose task it is to think through the whole educational task of the church, to determine policies, choose leaders, unify the program, take positions as to special days, school library, and such important matters. Only as such a committee guides the progress of the whole school can the school stand for a high level of educational attainment and religious vitality throughout every organization and department.

This Board of Religious Education needs to be made up of a few people in the church who are most likely to have sound educational judgment. Even after they are organized, however, they will need direction. They should not just decide each problem as it arises, but should make a real study of the whole purpose and program of the church school, followed by a careful study and evaluation of this particular school. They will then set up certain goals, make certain decisions and recommendations and proceed to build up the standards, through teachers' conferences, reorganization, and so on.

The average Board of Religious Education can scarcely enter upon such a program without some help. Many churches secure an expert in religious education from a city or state council or a university or college or the denominational office to meet with the committee once or twice to help them block out their work and plan their study. Other churches employ a full-time director of religious education who can not only guide the board in its study but can carry out the program determined by them. Though many directors have failed because they have not been trained in handling the human element and leading groups in a democratic way, and many others because they

have either specialized in one age-group and know nothing about others or they have only a general knowledge of the whole task, the church is often to blame because it employs people who have not had adequate training.

There is undoubtedly a great necessity for the Board of Religious Education and a great field for the Director of Education if both have vision, consecration, and skill.[1]

8. *The Contribution of the Minister.* The question of the place of the minister in the program of education is an important one. We have to take into consideration the following facts:

a. Many ministers have had no training in the seminary for this important phase of church life and do not realize that the future of the church rests largely on the training being given the children now. Others have no training but realize the need and either take up the study themselves or bring in experts who can give guidance to their people, or both. Many of the younger men come from seminaries which have introduced religious education and so are equipped to give real leadership.

[1] For a fuller discussion of the work of the Board of Religious Education, see Vieth, Paul H., *Improving Your Sunday School,* Chapter II. (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa.)

b. Many ministers are in such large churches and carry such heavy programs that they cannot possibly give direction to the educational program but will employ a director to do so. These men need, however, to have an understanding of the principles that lie back of the program in order that they may wisely employ the director and plan the church program so as to utilize all that the school is doing.

c. The ministers in smaller churches will need to be much closer to the program. In many cases the minister will be the only one in the church who is prepared to give guidance to the school. Many of these men are studying religious education through college or summer school courses or through reading courses of their own. Often they find that the spiritual level of the church life rises as the people become unified in their purpose to provide the best in education for the children.

The question which the minister faces, then, is "What contributions can a busy minister make to the church school?" I should like to suggest several outstanding avenues of service which many modern ministers have found to be valuable:

a. The teachers of the church school need to think carefully through their own conceptions of God, their own understanding of the spiritual laws

underlying prayer, of an historical view of the Bible and such related problems. The minister who has the educational point of view and is more interested in helping boys and girls, men and women to find reality in religious experience than in propagating doctrinal and theological terms, who can make these matters simple, clear, vivid, has a great contribution to make. One of his most effective means of reaching his people will be through his training of the Sunday School teachers so that all that they teach may be in harmony with the most wholesome and Christian point of view.

b. The minister who is alert on the social and international problems and achievements of today can also do much by sharing his knowledge and point of view with the teachers. They need to train the children and young people in Christian world attitudes. If they have no source of reading other than the newspapers they will need a great deal of information, with the Christian interpretation of current events. The minister can open up problems of this kind with the teachers, bring speakers to the church who can be shared with the various departments and quicken the school's interest in these vital Kingdom problems of today.

c. The minister needs to give general counsel to the school on matters of administration and

standards, providing he is trained to do so, or, as we have said, to know what kind of a director of education should be employed. In many ways he can utilize the results of the school's work in world friendship, evangelism, and so on.

d. Best of all, if the minister really loves people, he can help his church school teachers to get the vision of what it means to give individual guidance in spiritual matters, to learn how to work together in the school with the give and take, the generous uncritical spirit of true Christian fellowship, to inspire them with a passion for continuous improvement of self, the church, the social order. In fact, he can place the spiritual emphasis and endeavor at the very heart of all educational work. But to do this, he must also appreciate the work of the teachers, must cultivate friendships with the pupils and teachers. One of our writers tells often of her own minister who drops into the church kindergarten and takes an intimate part in whatever is going on at the moment, and so comes close to the heart of every child and teacher.

SUMMARY

With this broad program and enriched curriculum providing such a variety of experiences in religion; with a real effort being made to equip

our schools for real education, and to provide skillful teachers, we can expect the pupils to approach the work with a new earnestness and enthusiasm. We have attempted to secure this eagerness through records of attendance or through the group social life rather than through the quality of the learning and worship experience that is going on. With some of our enterprises leading into participation in the church, with each department feeling itself a part of the whole group attacking its problems together, a new church consciousness and solidarity will be built up, based not upon the loyalty to leaders or classes which is making so much trouble in the churches, but upon common aims and problems in the building of the Kingdom on earth.

This type of program demands the best in us. More and more schools are giving serious consideration to the religious needs of the children and are being challenged to provide the best for them.

Date Due

Ap 17 '40	FEB 10 '61		
My 30 '40	MAR 1 '61		
D 8 - '41	~~MAR 8 '61~~		
D 14 '43			
Ap 7 - 44			
Jl 5 - '44			
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